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**Dawbarn, Charles.**

France and the French







**FRANCE AND THE FRENCH**









THE QUAI GRANDS AUGUSTINS, SHOWING TOWERS OF NOTRE DAME  
FROM THE WATER-COLOUR BY J. F. RAFFAELLI

# FRANCE AND THE FRENCH

BY  
CHARLES DAWBARN

WITH SIXTEEN ILLUSTRATIONS

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TO  
MY FATHER  
THIS BOOK IS  
AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED





## PREFATORY NOTE

THIS has no pretension to be a monumental work, dull and didactic, laying down the law and instructing the French in the art of living. It is an attempt to present a moving picture of this intellectual and brilliant people, a picture founded upon personal observation and inspired by strong sympathies. We have had books in quantity of a statistical sort: minute descriptions of French institutions, and an analysis of their differences from the English. We have had, also, books that deal frivolously with the French, as with a people who are infantile and have no right to the name of serious men and women. Such books are legion, too. If they translate French, it is literally done; and we are asked to laugh, not at the crudities of the performing clown, but at the folly of his subjects of ridicule. The French are not a frivolous people—I hope I show it in this book; I hope, also, that I demonstrate some of their other qualities, too often disregarded by their portraitists and historians. The personal view is always presented, but, in certain of the more serious sections of the book, I explain, in detail,

organisation and conception, as in the chapter on education.

It remains for me to thank my kind friends, French and English, who have helped me in the work with suggestion or in other ways. First and foremost, my thanks are due to Mr. Herbert de Beer, whose aid has been invaluable both in discerning criticism and in the careful reading of MS. Also for kind advice I would thank G. L. H., Mrs. L. Macdonald, M. Buisson, etc. etc.

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# FRANCE AND THE FRENCH

## CHAPTER I

### THE MODERN DEVELOPMENT OF FRANCE

TEN years' continued residence in a country may explain even if it does not condone a book on the subject. A decade is all too short, but it has this advantage, that one has not lost the outsider's point of view or become insensible to peculiarities. I have had the privilege of mixing with all classes of French people by reason of my professional occupations, which have taken me everywhere and given me the entrée to the most interesting as well as the most varied society. In the course of a decade, I have come to regard the French with much sympathy, and, I hope, with insight. Such errors as I have committed should not be set down to disinclination to credit them with the many virtues they possess. But their very brilliance and quick-silvery character make them difficult to photograph. There are shades in their individuality which elude the ruder intellect of the Anglo-Saxon—fine points in the mental make-up which do not appeal; ways of thought and an attitude towards life which are sometimes inexplicable. But the foundation of intent remains, that intent to make the most of the present world, to catch the last ray of the sun, to utilize every moment as an opportunity for life

and, perhaps, for love, for the two words are almost interchangeable in this fascinating country, where intellectual existence presents the variety of the kaleidoscope.

No comprehension of the present French people is possible without due appreciation of the causes which have gone to the building up of the national character and the formation of the national institutions. Modern French history seems to begin at the great Revolution. It was the foundation of liberties; it represented the terrible "*cri du cœur*" of a people struggling to be free, roused into fierce hatred of the aristocracy. And yet, much that is wonderful and beautiful in France is thrown back to the splendid days of the *Roi Soleil* and his patronage of arts and letters. Before that, France was obscure and tangled in her destinies, slowly emerging from the Middle Ages, bearing no worthy part with England in her steady progress towards enlightenment and personal liberty. But the Sun King dowered France with noble avenues, with splendid *châteaux*, with all the decorative paraphernalia of kingship. The Fourteenth and Fifteenth Louis have left glorious architectural vestiges of their presence in the radiant avenues of Paris and in the monuments of the neighbourhood. Yet the callousness of kings was responsible for weaning a loyal people from their loyalty. An absolute indifference to the welfare of the subject stands revealed in the famous phrases: "*L'État, c'est moi*," and "*Après moi, le déluge*." The French Revolution was rendered possible by Richelieu's policy of abasing the rich. And, after the *Fronde*—the Civil War between the Court party and the Parliament, during the minority of Louis XIV—the *châteaux* of the nobles were destroyed, thus detaching them from the soil.

Louis XIV accentuated the movement by summoning the grand seigneurs to Paris as his entourage at Court.



It became a disgrace and tantamount to exile for a lord to remain on his "terres." Absentee landlordism further estranged the peasantry, already exasperated by poverty and the exactions of the "fermiers généraux." The people lived in the utmost misery and degradation, whilst the monarch gave freely to his nobles and favourites any part of the national riches that he did not want for himself. And a Minister, to whom the observation was made that "the people must live," replied in the true spirit of his Royal Master, "I do not see the necessity." Poverty, then, and the indifference of their rulers brought on the great cataclysm; nor, of course, were matters helped by the notorious incapacity of Louis XVI. If the Fourteenth Louis had brilliant notions of government, notwithstanding his defects, the looseness of the Regent prepared the way for the licentiousness of Louis XV, one of the greatest egoists who ever lived, whose thoughts were centred in indulgence. Of the city of Paris it was said: "*Les murs murant Paris rendent Paris murmurant*," the reason being that the walls brought in the Octroi and increased the burdens of the people. Nor must we accept the easy optimism of certain historians, who protested that, despite appearances, the people were not as poor as they pretended.

Though the Revolution left, as a rich and abiding legacy, the Declaration of the Rights of Man, its blood-thirsty character appals. Leaders of the movement contemplated with equanimity the slaughter of 400,000 people. Imagine such a thing! Imagine the wantonness of it! Imagine, also, the effect upon the human character of a glut of blood such as that entailed by the destruction of the fine flower of French nobility! Are there no traces of the spirit left? Is there nothing in the mental atmosphere of Paris to suggest that this sanguinary

period in the national history has not been utterly effaced? On the contrary, it would seem to have a sinister influence upon present-day manifestations. The Parisian love of sensation and the love of certain extremists, such as demagogues and revolutionaries, to "*épater la bourgeoisie*" are signs of this spirit. The May Day demonstrations which bring about such vast assemblages of troops, all point the same way: that there is a sullen creature waiting to spring at the throat of wealth the moment it no longer fears the policeman. When, for any reason, there is an absence of protective measures, this dangerous residuum comes to the surface. I have seen it many times revealed in strange outbursts of violence, sudden attacks upon property and persons: the revolt of the disinherited against the possessors. Part of the Apache difficulty is attached to this very problem—to this curious undercurrent and subterranean sea of class-hatred, of jealousy, of a desire to obtain the good things of the world without the sustained struggle of the labourer. Often there are visions of this cleavage of the classes. In Paris, it seems strangely conspicuous by reason of proximities. At a great race-meeting, in the Bois de Boulogne, you have a gathering of the masses side-by-side with an astonishing array of elegance and plutocratic arrogance. In a sumptuous limousine, the woman of fashion speeds her way to the course and, alighting, becomes an object of envy, doubtless, to the vast throng, which remarks her costly dress and sparkling jewels.

There are causes that breed this spirit of discontent in the town itself. Often the Baron and the banker and professional man occupy the lower floors of the house, whilst upon the sixth lives, in a squalid chamber, the little "*midinette*" or humble workman. The artisan rubs shoulders with wealth on the staircase, and is it not likely

that such propinquity gives especial acuteness to any study in comparisons?

It has often been said that the fear of the spectre at the feast, the thought of some worn and hungry face looking in at the window of the restaurant where Dives eats, has been the cause of limiting the expenditure of the rich man upon his pleasures. The Bourgeois is a timid soul in France, and is perpetually compelled by his fears to pay backsheesh to the Social Revolution. The guillotine, in the days of the Terror, did its work so thoroughly that little remains that can consistently be accounted aristocratic. All hatred of the class has passed. The anarchist, led to execution for his outrage upon established society, does not cry "Death to the Aristocrats," but "Death to the Bourgeoisie." The Bourgeoisie certainly is to be the aim of anarchistic effort in the future, and, if once the mob gets out of hand, middle-class prosperity will be the first victim. This knowledge colours politics in France; elsewhere in these pages I enlarge upon the theme, and endeavour to show that legislation is engaged in discounting revolution by forestalling, in some sort, the demands of the people.

It is clear, then, that past deeds of blood have left their mark on men and manners, on methods of thought, on the style of propaganda. The most common instrument in furthering policies to-day is intimidation; it is the weapon of the "syndicats," or trade unions. The workmen use it against their "patrons," and they use it against their fellows, who refuse to join the professional corporations. No more sinister sign of the tyranny of trade unionism could be found than the outrages perpetrated by the "rouges" or syndicated workmen upon the "jaunes" or independent workmen, known, in the jargon of the shops and factories, as the "renards." Evidently, then, under the thin veneer of civilization is brutality and a thirst for

violent experiment, which bodes ill for the security of the public if once the safeguards are relaxed. A somewhat hasty, time-serving, propitiating legislation must result from efforts to ward off the evil day. One wonders how far concession can go before the bed-rock is reached, when it is no longer possible to give way without material sacrifices, and without the evacuation of positions hardly won. M. Paul Bourget in his striking play, "La Barricade," insists on the principle that the middle classes must merit their situation in the world by their superior energy and intelligence; yet to-day they bow before the demagogue. If the walls of the social Jericho fall at the first blast of the trumpet, then, obviously, nothing remains but defeat and devastation.

Common sense, which distinguishes all French people, saves them from the worst excesses of their own lively imaginings. A man of twenty-five does not think as a man of forty-five. In the same way the politician who begins with wild, impracticable dreams of social equality and emancipation, quickly finds, when called to office and weighted with the responsibilities of material interests, that his political aspirations cannot be realized without too great a sacrifice of national dignity and expediency.

So much for an "aperçu" of political tendencies in France. The Third Republic is often referred to in the "*chaleur communicative du banquet*," to use a phrase originating with a Minister's after-dinner confidences, as a direct symbol and child of the great "*bouleversement*" of a hundred and twenty years ago. But, as a matter of strict historical fact, it is somewhat otherwise. Thiers, when he founded the Third Republic, had clearly in mind the return of a limited monarchy. The second President, Marshal MacMahon, was really elected by the National Assembly as a sort of Monk preparing the way for the

Restoration. Examine the Constitution of 1873, and you will find that in the purely representative and politically colourless rôle of the President there was evident intention to give him the character of an uncrowned constitutional King. He plays a part which is effaced and appears to have no real weight in the country. Whilst it is perfectly true that the President cannot even recall a *Sous-Préfet* of a department on his own initiative, he is, at the same time, invested with sovereign powers in the making of treaties, and, had he the necessary individuality and strength of character, he could play an interesting and decided social rôle. Few of the early Presidents, and none of the recent ones, have emerged from the inconspicuousness which the party caucus that elects them seems determined they shall have; at the same time, the real reason underlying this selection of a neutral Chief of Executive is fear of a Dictator. The "coup d'état" which turned the Third Napoleon from a Prince-President into an Emperor, would, perchance, find imitators if, instead of appointing men purely for their safe and colourless personality, the combined Chambers were to elect Republicans of physical vigour, capable and anxious to lead in their country's destinies. For this reason the brilliant man likely to be possessed of ambition to wear the cloak of a Cæsar, is invariably rejected in favour of Presidents of the type of Loubet and Fallières, who, descended from good peasant stock, have no other wish than to carry out their duties with simple and unostentatious devotion. Yet one must regret that so brilliant a people as the French are forced by political exigencies to limit their choice to the "safe" man. Sadi Carnot had the bearing and demeanour of an aristocrat: he was, and he looked, a man of family. The poignard of the assassin ended his days. Casimir Perier, another Republican of good birth and antecedents, resigned



office after six months ; no one will ever know why, since his secret is buried with him. After that, Felix Faure, the immediate predecessor of M. Loubet, showed something of the temper of an Imperialist Pretender. It was he who invented what state there is in the progress of a President : the "daumont" with its postillions and outriders. His death, though clearly to be attributed to his ill-health at the time, is persistently interpreted in some quarters as an act of precaution by the dominant party in the State against his assumption of the rôle of dictator.

All the tendencies, therefore, of modern France are towards the preservation of the Republic, because men of mark are speedily pulled down and their progress hindered ; thus the dead level of mediocrity is not disturbed. In that delightful play, "*Le Bois Sacré*," by MM. de Caillavet and de Flers, the Minister of Fine Arts says : "Talent ! What do you want with talent in a Republic ? It is undemocratic for one artist to paint better than another." Any commander of marked ability is watched jealously by the Republic lest, in the success and enthusiasm engendered by his victories, he become a dangerous aspirant for high authority.

In the dead level of democracy may be found, perhaps, one of the reasons why Parliamentaryism has a tendency to become sterile. The absence of real leaders is of the essence of Republicanism ; such a soil is unkindly to the growth of qualities needful to distinction. Hence, it may be assumed that the failure of Parliament, of which I speak in these pages, is largely due to that nice balance of mediocrities, which brings about stagnation. Then, again, big issues are necessary to Parliamentary progress ; there must be a vast governmental energy, a legislative hastening to remedy abuses and to institute reforms. But, in France, at the present day, you can have, practically, none



of these things. The great questions have already been settled. There is no House of Lords to throw down ; the aristocracy was abolished a hundred years ago ; in the same way, the land question was for all time solved by a seizure of the property of the nobles and by a minute subdivision of all estates amongst the peasantry.

Whether we approve or not of confiscation in these conditions—though compensation, or restitution, was afterwards made—we have, as a result, a peasantry settled upon the land and deeply attached thereto, possessing instincts that are conservative, like those of all agrarian peoples, and whose one thought is to add field to field. In Russia, the conditions (if we except the ignorance of the peasantry) are very much the same. There is no aristocracy properly so called. Thanks to the institution of the *Mir*, the peasant holds the land. He has no political aspirations ; he cares nothing for revolutionary outbreaks and never rises in revolt against police and administrations. His ambitions are bounded by his fields. He thinks in pastures, and dreams in corn lands. God, the Tsar and the Peasant : that is his hierarchy. He has no feeling except that of homage towards the Little Father ; all his enmity is directed against the *Intelligenza* or black-coats in the towns. It is they who make the hubbub, who inspire revolutions and get themselves talked about in newspapers ; so that the world thinks that Russia is coming to an end—crumbling to pieces in a vast social cataclysm.

With certain qualifications, these remarks apply to France. Here you have the peasant working upon the land—two-thirds of the population live in the villages and hamlets. The one-third in the towns may sway things momentarily, but not “all the time.” The great Revolution, it is true, was the work of Paris and the large towns, which imposed their will on the country. But

times have changed, and with them the rural dweller. He is no longer the country bumpkin, ignorant and credulous. He has a mind of his own, though he must still take his politics from Paris to a large extent. Yet he knows the quality of the men who speak for him, and judges them much more dispassionately than the townsman, who is a hot-headed and often foolish partisan. A revolution of a kind might well be brought about by discontented workmen in the towns, but the landed, settled country—the blue-bloused peasant—would refuse to follow. This is the conservatism of France, the great passive force resisting innovations and brusque changes of regime. It is not for me to prophesy with certitude the continued existence of the Republic, but the signs certainly are in that direction. Monarchy would appear to be dead, hopelessly dead, and it has scarcely a voice left at the elections. So fully is this realized that Bonapartists and Royalists disguise their real political identity, either under the name of Nationalists, which covers a variety of political creeds, or of Moderate Republicans. Each succeeding General Election confirms the decision of the people to be governed as a pure democracy. Yet it is always possible to imagine some great personality arising who would wave the tri-colour and flaunt the “panache” before the eyes of the people. It is a man with the stomach of a great organizer who would lead and acquire power in France, some one with the traits of Boulanger, but of fibre instead of clay. Had the General been a man of decision he would have found his way, no doubt, to the Elysée. Yet, even supposing the power assumed and the people hypnotized momentarily by the splendour of fine deeds and the renown of a “beau nom,” it is difficult to believe that the Dictator, so rudely imposed, could retain the allegiance and inspire the devotion of the French people. History

establishes the French love of change, their brusque methods of reform. But illusions have gone with advancement in philosophy and all the arts of civilization. The twentieth-century Frenchman, of ordinary culture, refuses to believe any more in the legislative miracle, just as he refuses to be stirred by the threat of revolution. His scepticism has produced a sort of cynicism and a determination to count only on himself. This attitude is well reflected in the calm that descends upon the country when the Chamber is in recess. It is apparent that its very existence is something of a bore, in any case, a very potent cause of trouble. And the French have become an irreverent people, caring little for forms and ceremonies. They have thrown down the Altar; why should they set up the Throne? Again, aristocracy is necessary as a support to royalty, and the "vieille noblesse" exists no more.

For this reason, a permanent return to monarchical institutions is not only problematical, but almost impossible. If a king were installed in the palace of Madame de Pompadour, they would "tutoyer" him on the Boulevards, and lampoons would appear depicting him in all manner of undignified postures—unless a press censorship were established, as in the old days of the Second Empire, which is hardly to be thought of in a century where the liberty and even the licence of the Fourth Estate is accepted as inevitable. The restrictions upon public writers, imposed by the Third Napoleon, are partly responsible for the present unbridled spirit of mockery; contrast and love of contradiction are guiding impulses with the Parisian. These things, taken together, make me think that, ephemeral phases of ill-health notwithstanding, the Republic is of sound constitution and likely to live long in the land. A throne cannot be set up to stand by

itself: it must have its concomitants: its aristocracy, the elements of a brilliant Court, its traditions, ceremonials and usages, and finally, it must live in the hearts of the people.

There are many to tell you that the Frenchman is, at bottom, monarchical. Especially in country parts, you will find people of the older generation sighing for the days when an Emperor reigned and there were State pageants in some other shape than those given by a bourgeois President. These people will tell you that manners and morals have declined under the present regime; that parents are frightened at their children's lack of respect; that the wise restraint of religion exists no longer; that the Mass, muttered through perfunctorily, has come to mean a social ceremony and nothing more, and that there is general decadence since the Church ceased to be a vital influence in the lives of the people. The negligence, almost the penury of the Presidential household, is the common theme of some critics. Horses are said to be hired to draw the Presidential barouche on State occasions. Are not the receptions at the palace in the Faubourg St. Honoré functions to which one sends one's concierge and bootmaker? Were not President Grévy's fêtes so beggarly that people laughed for a week after at the appearance of the guests? at their tawdry or grimy equipages? Unquestionably, there is little *éclat* in Republican ceremony and circumstance. Chiefs of the State have not been distinctively decorative—on the contrary, they may be described as commonplace. Though Felix Faure dreamed, it is said, of Napoleonic splendour, his successors have carefully refrained from giving any such impression. Obviously, there is no glamour and tinsel in this Republic, but it suits the present temper of the people, even though they are monarchical and love the glitter of Royal display.

Along a certain omnibus route in Paris is a section of aristocratic mien, and another section, situated at the extreme end of the line, industrial and even squalid in character. When the conductor is taking fares in the aristocratic quarter, his manners are impeccable. He assumes an easy smile and asks politely for his fares. But, when his well-dressed passengers have departed and the vehicle is filled with the clerk and workman, his mood changes. He is no longer subservient, for he is no longer hopeful of an extra sou in response to his insinuating smile. He knows he will receive the hard fare and nothing more, and so his demands are gruff, and his replies as laconic as possible. There has entered into him a spirit of the "fonctionnaire" with his habitual disdain of the "pékin." This is typical of France.

Napoleonic wars have left their scars upon the nation, just as has the Reign of Terror. France is a military nation, but she is a military nation turned pacific. She is like the robber who becomes a respectable householder. There are days when the yearning for the old unholy occupation comes strong upon him. He looks out of doors and remarks the fat and prosperous passer-by, wondering vaguely what would happen to himself if he ran after his hypothetical victim, knocked him down, and took his watch. In the same way, the French sometimes look out of doors to see the "pantalons rouges" go by—vivacious "petits soldats" of France, as merry after a long day's march as when they left barracks in the morning. And martial ardour comes upon them as they salute the flag. For a moment, their thoughts take a reminiscent turn. They remember that they were soldiers once, and that there have been great warriors in the family: men who thought more of glory than of money, men who fought for country and added territory and rich



treasure to the national patrimony. These things put the breath of war into them and, in imagination, they tramp behind the bugles and the drums. "Panache" reigns, atavism speaks, long centuries of military glory grow to a sudden eloquence.

But solid prosperity has made Jacques Bonhomme a pacific person; his victories to-day are won upon the European money-markets, whereas, formerly, they were gained upon the field of carnage. He lends money to all the world and receives good and safe interest for it. When Russia felt the necessity of war with Japan, to settle the nightmare of Manchuria, she went to Paris to get the money. Islam grown proud and combative in the new turn of events at Constantinople, wishes to build a fleet to overawe the Greeks; she, too, makes request to the Protectors of the Christians in the Orient for the wherewithal. The "bas de laine" of the peasants of France has become the money-box in which governments bent on industry or enterprise dip their hands. It seems as inexhaustible as the Widow's Cruse. You have, then, two divergent influences at work: the old spirit speaking in accents of military genius, and the small prudent voice of the obsequious shopkeeper. France is a consummate shopkeeper, yet this does not prevent her from leading in aeroplanes and other romantic things that, *prima facie*, have little monetary value in them.

There is something significant in the fact that the period between the First Republic and the Second began with Napoleon, peer of Hannibal and Charlemagne, and ended with the son of Philippe Egalité, Louis Philippe, the bourgeois king, whose symbol of office was an umbrella, and whose sons attended a lycée. It is not surprising that in those days of the good citizen king there was evolved, as emblem of the nation, the figure of Joseph Prudhomme,

sleeker and slyer even than John Bull, of whose corporeal features I have never been particularly proud. Joseph Prudhomme represents a typical Frenchman of what English people call the early Victorian era. He is a creature pompous and self-satisfied, who is perpetually counting his money.

If we bridge another period, a period which includes the brilliant epoch of the Third Napoleon, and the Empress Eugénie, there emerges a figure which has for me much of the semblance and personal characteristics of the national Prudhomme: it is Thiers, the saviour of the country, the man who secured the redemption of France after the War of '71, and its First President. A most worthy man, filled with a true and noble patriotism, who spared himself no pains to draw his country from the abyss of misfortune, and who not only liberated the territory from the yoke of the indemnity, but also divined Bismarck's new Machiavellian schemes and sought and obtained the intervention of the Tsar Alexander II. This man, I say, has something of the "tournure" of Joseph Prudhomme, and I am not surprised that he left the Louvre copies of old masters, or that he should have declared, when driven forth by an ungrateful Republic to his own fireside, that he returned, thankfully, to his "*chères études*." Those who have read the bulky result of those studies (excellent, however, in their military aspect) will understand the smile with which the "mot" is always received in France. Here, then, is a bourgeois thread linking us with the House of Orleans.

As to the Revolution itself, was not that the work of the bourgeoisie? Were not Danton and Robespierre, Marat and the others so many middle-class men? It is not so astonishing, therefore, if, in the process of time, this very class should be menaced by a lower stratum surging

to the top. Is it not rather the logic of events? Yet it is singular that there should be none to reap the succession of the great middle class in Parliament. Who is to succeed Clemenceau, Léon Bourgeois, Poincaré, Henri Brisson, Alexandre Ribot? No man from this social rank is visible on the horizon as a likely candidate. There is M. Paul Deschanel, polished, erudite, speaking the language of real oratory, but he is condemned in advance for supposed Reactionary leanings.

Therefore, the problem poses: Where is the champion of the Middle Classes? The process is perpetual from below upwards. Jean Jaurès, Socialist orator, is, by his theories, the predestined leader of to-morrow—or, at least a follower of his school. True, his origin is also bourgeois, but his doctrines are of the proletariat. Aristide Briand has conquered Moderate suffrages by a denial of his past and is, to-day, the last of the great Bourgeois leaders. Thus, in the natural course of things, the Middle Classes will be submerged by the classes underneath. To avoid such a fate, energy and resolution and courage beyond the wont must be exhibited.

Napoleon, with deep knowledge of his countrymen, gave the Constitution a rigid frame in its Ministries. He took care that though Cabinets might come, and Cabinets might go, the great Departments of State should flow on for ever. The Minister has almost regal power and position. He moves like a sovereign through the country on official tours. His arrival is heralded by telegraph and punctuated with brass bands, official delegations headed by the Prefect and "vins d'honneur." An English Cabinet Minister quietly descends at the station, bag in hand, addresses the assembled burgesses at the Town Hall, and as quietly departs, without a mobilization of the local corps of

volunteers or even of the firemen—to quench inflammatory language perhaps—or so much as an obsequious handshake by the Lord-Lieutenant of the county. The President, as the apex of the Constitution, is also more royal than a king in his journeyings. Everywhere his progress is marked by fanfares blaring the Marseillaise, by banquets and gatherings of public officials and by the distribution of crosses and decorations of all sorts. Though, in the public eye, the symbol and representative of the Republic, the President is much less directly powerful than a Minister. The Minister is the real fount of honour, and his patronage means the blossoming of button-holes with a garniture of ribbon. The great Corsican, in his wisdom, saw that the French needed masters, and gave departmental omnipotence to the members of the Government. They represent rigidity and permanence in a country which, till recently, was famous for its floating politics. Waldeck-Rousseau's Ministry of three years established a record for longevity; since that day there have been others to equal it, within a few months, in the tenure of their rank.

Yet, as I show above, the conditions of democratic government in France are such as to prevent a great legislative accomplishment. The nice balance of momentum with inertia produces equipoise—a sort of sterile stability, a stable infecundity. It is simply progress round a circle, an orbit marked and measured, the swathe of the governmental scythe. It becomes those who are concerned at the stagnation to prescribe a remedy. It is for this reason that the "scrutin de liste," or list-voting, has come to the fore, since the appeal to a department, instead of to a small community, gives a greater choice of candidates. There is chance for real distinction to emerge in the broad area of a county, whereas election by

arrondissements gives currency and emphasis to local prejudices and brings into undue prominence the intrigues of localities to forward their own interests.

Thus M. Dupont, deputy for "un petit trou pas cher," found favour with his electors and obtained renewal of his Parliamentary mandate by voting for the use of public moneys in the construction of a canal or hippodrome affecting chiefly his own constituency. Many a man, elected under the old system, has found that to propose expenditure, which expenditure would fall upon the national purse, was the surest and speediest means of ensuring popularity. The disregard of the ordinary deputy for national interests is one of the conspicuous defects of the democratic regime in France, and, indeed, everywhere on the civilized globe. This extension of the Parliamentary constituency is thought to be of value in reforming Parliament; but it is not quite clear whether the result aimed at will be realized. In any case, it is a melancholy state of affairs when Parliamentarism has to be galvanized into life, or some appearance of life, by the constant injection of new political serums. It points to serious malady in the body politic, a certain unhealthiness of the constituent organs of public opinion. These experiments to encourage patriotism, are they not symptoms of a decay in representative government? Do they not mark a period of uneasy calm, presaging a violent and early change in regime? As I have said, elsewhere, in this chapter, no return to the old Monarchical institution can be anticipated, that is, no permanent return, but that does not preclude the possibility of some adventurous reformer clutching at the reins of power and momentarily occupying the seat of driver of the Republican coach. Development will come, perhaps, in "a series of little tragedies," as M. Alfred Capus happily expressed it, in a conversation



with the writer. There will be a constant rectification of the frontier line as one class moves upwards and encroaches upon the territory of the other.

If there is decadence, it is unaccompanied by iridescence: the bright unnatural glow which persons in a fever show, often regarded as health by the unpractised eye. There is, certainly, no brilliant dawn in France suggesting the days of poetic realizations. On the other hand, there is no sunset, flaming red and orange, as of a nation sinking to the evening dark. The light remains steady, with opalescent effect.

France of to-day is faced with problems that every nation, however strong, will sooner or later, have to solve. She has fought and settled all those thorny matters, which, at this moment, fill the British prophets with great doubt as to their nation's safe emergence therefrom; but there are others of a vaster potentiality and, perhaps, of a graver import. Take, for instance, the dwindling population; how shall it be met? Here is a public matter and here is a private matter: which view shall prevail? If it is a private business, this rearing of children, who shall intervene save in the name of the Scriptural injunction, "Increase and multiply," given in the early days of the world's history and having, in any case, lessened significance in a country which has broken largely with established religion and with conventional belief? But, if child-bearing is of value to the community, shall not the community pay, shall it not render itself liable for the rearing and education and sustenance, during years of minority, of the children that are brought into the world at the dictates of an altruistic patriotism? The Frenchman of to-day, with the cold logic that distinguishes him, is apt to argue in this way. "If the State require me to have children," he says, "then the State must compensate me for the extra

burden it places on my shoulders." Part of the reluctance of French parents to give hostages to fortune is the feeling and tradition, deeply rooted, that they must leave their offspring in as good a position, financially, as they were themselves at the moment of bringing those children into the world. It is a complicated system of self-protection and a highly scientific thought for to-morrow which keeps the birth-rate down and threatens the very continuance of the race. H. G. Wells, in a remarkable article, asks: "How do you propose to employ the children? As food for powder, or food for capitalists?" Clearly it is not sufficient to fill the quiver: you must know whither the arrows are destined in their flight through the world.

I believe that the great problems, with which France will have to deal in the immediate future, will have intimate connection with this haunting alternative: food for capitalists or food for powder. Anti-militarism—we have heard much of it, more than is at present warranted, perhaps—is a question that will have to be faced as the world grows more enlightened, higher education more widely disseminated, and armaments and means of destroying fellow-men less in consonance with civilized opinion.

Another result of modern life is the enfeebling of the human body, rendering a man less apt for war. As the complexities and refinements of existence increase, the hardships of military campaigning become insupportable to the race. The theory that intellectual achievements and physical exercise are diametrically opposed weighs with the French parents in their attitude towards sport. They are convinced that one cannot be carried on without injury to the other.

In a different order of ideas is the Socialism existing in Germany as well as in France, which likewise weakens the military arm. Recent elections and the admissions of a high military officer have given point to the suggestion

that the citadel of Imperialism is undermined by Social Democracy. The army is admittedly attacked. Does the future offer prospects of peace by reason of the union of the proletariat to prevent war? Will the Monster be dethroned whose dragon shape upon the horizon casts into the black shadow of onerous fiscal conditions and a grinding blood-tax a hundred and twenty millions of laborious peoples? Socialists in France and Socialists in Germany are reaching out to the Universal Brotherhood which, when it comes—if ever it does come—will usher in the reign of Universal Peace and concord upon earth, when swords shall be turned into plough-shares and spears into pruning-hooks. A millennium of this sort is evidently not of to-day, nor of to-morrow—perhaps not of any morrow. We must accept things as they are, and we must recognize, even if we be Pacifists—conscious to the full of the horrors and absurdities of war—that the military regime has done this much good to France, that it has brought home to the people the wondrous lesson which we may call “*la charge de la communauté.*” Whenever the Man in the Street sees the regiment go by he must recognize it as the embodiment of the national spirit, the symbol of self-sacrifice, calling upon him, if need be, to leave his fire-side and his personal affairs to defend the national soil. He realizes the value of such a lesson to people given up, as modern communities are, to an engrossing commercialism, to an all-absorbing interest in the accumulation of the “*bien être.*” He realizes that he is part of a great defensive army which is bound to risk its life and give its physical and mental best to the protection of the country against the invader. These things have an inestimable influence upon the formation of the national character. They replace Jingoism by a practical patriotism, and they make each man conscious that in his person is some

portion of the national flag, some intimate, integral part of the great national existence.

In its physical aspects the universal call to arms has an immense and increasing effect. Quite recently the French have adopted the two years' military service system. At the time of introducing this change they resolved, in order to compensate for the loss that such an innovation entailed in the effectives of the army, to suppress all exemptions. Up to that moment a little political influence went a very long way in excusing young men of unmilitary ambitions from the "corvée" of the three years' service with the colours. Those who passed their baccalaureate were by right excused two years of the term, and enjoyed the privileged position of one-year soldiers. These exemptions, indeed, were widespread. The only son of a widowed mother was placed in the same category as the "bachelor"; young seminarists were excused service, as were future officers attending the military academy of St. Cyr and the other special schools which furnish commissions in the French army. The halcyon days of this privileged community are now over; every young man, even the senator's son, must complete his full term in a regiment, and, moreover, authority is less indulgent towards any absence from drill. These hardships, if they are hardships in the real sense, have wrought an infinite physical good to the nation. The rising generation, which is inclined to be self-indulgent in the pursuit of a quiet life in the country, has been strengthened in body and mind by discipline and by service in the rough school of the barrack square, with its sharp commands as sharply answered. Route marching over long distances under the weight of rifles and knapsacks is a severe physical training which has effected the greatest good in upbuilding the physique and in accustoming men to fatigue and resistance

to climatic changes. Judged from this point of view, the constant fear of invasion by a foreign army is most salutary in preventing people like the French, inclined to exaggeration in all things, from becoming emasculated and physically degenerate.

That excellent writer, Norman Angell, whose "Great Illusion" is one of the most suggestive of books, calls attention to the great rôle of the money markets of the world in the maintenance of peace. The more complicated those relations grow, the less likelihood there is, he thinks, of an outbreak of hostilities. Whether we accept this extremely interesting theory with the confident optimism which he bestows upon it, at least we must realize that France, during the last few years, has come to play the part of peacemaker in Europe, because of her vast and superabundant wealth. Is it not remarkable that, whilst the conqueror of forty years ago is feeling, to a distressing degree, the obligation to provide for a vast army and a vast navy, the victims of her military predominance, with half the population and half the industrial development, have become the great money-lenders of the world? Nations can hardly wage war without the consent of wealthy Marianne. The late autumn of 1910 offered a curious example of a French Minister of Foreign Affairs dictating terms to would-be borrowers. When the Government of Constantinople asked for £6,000,000 from French pockets to acquire a navy, the French Minister (M. Pichon) replied: "If we give you the money, you must give us undertakings as to the spending of it." In the same way, when Hungary approached France for a loan of £22,000,000, the proposal was refused because the produce was to be used in a direction inimical to French interests and for the advancement of the offensive policy of the Triple Alliance. In both cases the



money was obtained with difficulty elsewhere, but here was a new, and perhaps, dangerous diplomatic demonstration of the power of gold.

We have traced rapidly the development of modern France from the stirring and terrible times of the great Revolution through the Directory and Consulate, to the brilliant and yet disastrous epoch of the First Empire; thence, to the unsatisfactory period of the Restoration and the rapid end, with the Bourgeois King, of the legitimate line, and the reappearance of the Napoleonic legend—eighteen years of meretricious Empire. We have pointed to the timid and almost Monarchical beginnings of the Third Republic and, in the pages that follow, we attempt to prove that France has eventually arrived at the steep wall, beyond which is an uninviting country: a howling wilderness of untried and perilous political theories. We show that the Bourgeoisie which has enjoyed forty years of Bourgeois government, is in danger of the domination of a class which has had no experience in the handling of responsible interests. So much for the internal situation and policy of France.

In the wider field of "welt-politik," she realizes that the phase of conquest is over. No more shall she issue to trembling Europe the lofty challenge of a Continental System; no more [save, perhaps, in Morocco, where she is the policeman of Europe] shall she wrest the desert from nomadic tribesmen; no longer shall she plant the Tricolor on distant continents, on the vast and peopled plains of Asiatic dependencies. These days of glory and military "panache" are ended. She must be content to draw what advantage she can from the possession of unbounded wealth, which enables her to dictate a policy to those who seek her financial aid. She possesses the power of the purse; is it not as potent as that of the sword?

## CHAPTER II

### A STUDY IN COMPARATIVE MORALITIES

HERE is nothing more difficult or delicate to discuss than morality. What do we mean by morality? It has different interpretations in different lands. Some cynic declared that it was purely a question of latitude. The French, certainly, have ideas of morality different from the English. As to whether they are worse or better, that is fit subject for discussion, but I make no attempt to settle it here. I have heard French people object to the "Geisha" on the ground that it was immoral, though to most English people it seems the most innocent of musical comedies. To the cold, logical French mind, the "Geisha" meant a certain thing, and nothing else: nor could there be any romance or prettiness in it. In the same way, I have heard disapproval of the high-kicking of English "danseuses." It is indelicate as well as inartistic, say the critics, yet in establishments in Montmartre the provocative exhibition of linen is anything but refined or moral. How do you account for this apparent inconsistency, this sudden access of prudery? I take it that the French like to keep their entertainments in water-tight compartments: the decent rigidly decent, whilst the indecorous may be astoundingly improper. This desire to mark respectability from its converse is seen in the plainness with which the "jeune fille" of bourgeois family dresses, in distinction, doubtless, from

the splendours of the "demi-mondaine." In the same way the literature given to children in respectable houses in France is astonishingly insipid and cannot compare in matter or treatment with the English or American child's story—again a desire to erect a barrier between the highly-spiced literature of later years. The strictness with which girls are brought up in France contrasts all the more vividly with their liberty as married women.

In what are called the "lieux de plaisir" of Paris there is certainly no nice regard for decency. Ribald gaiety and manifestations of the grosser spirit prevail. It is true that these places are not, as a rule, frequented by Parisians. The English and American bulk largely in the summer population of the city, and there is, at all times, a vast ingathering of foreigners and provincials sufficient to keep going a dozen establishments of doubtful "genre." The chief upholder of the objectionable spectacle of the gay restaurant is the visitor and not the Parisian. When the Boer War was in progress and English people abstained from Paris by reason of the Anglophobia of the Press, and from a reluctance to adopt the festive air whilst their country was passing through a crisis, the Moulin Rouge—historic home of the can-can—closed its doors. It could not live without the English. Here, again, is a problem in morality or expediency.

The Parisian who visits such spectacles is a "rara avis." The chief supporter of all shows of the kind is the Anglo-Saxon who, rigidly correct in his behaviour at home, unbends abroad. He does not realize that his patronage of vulgar pleasures is misconstrued into approval. I have met distinguished Frenchmen, Paris-bred, who, even in student days, have never seen the inside of a "cabaret artistique." It is possible to find numbers of respectable

French who never visit cafés, regarding the practice as a waste of time incompatible with a serious career.

There is, I know, another reason which is less praiseworthy. Young men of the present day often decline the cheap comforts and easy environment of a café simply because they are accessible to everybody and signify—or seem to signify—that one is without social relations, and, therefore, dependent on such institutions. Such a class of man will not be seen, even in the better sort of restaurants, for fear of the accusation that he has no friends to invite him to dinner.

All this comes within the borders of expediency—the larger area of morality. Take, again, the marriage question. The Frenchman shows cold-blooded calculation in the choice of a wife, which is guided to some extent by the value of her “dot.” Most careful attention is given to the question of fortune, and the ideal marriage is supposed to be the union of a man and woman whose fortunes are identical. Certainly, so careful a commercial arrangement prevents many of the disappointments that await married life in England. In France a man knows exactly what he is going in for and what he has to expect. Marriage without love is fairly common in England, and less common than one would suppose in France. By a merciful dispensation of Providence, the love seems to come after marriage, after common life has begun and given to each the knowledge of the other’s temperament. By virtue of her “dot,” the woman has a certain economic independence, which renders her a partner in her husband’s undertakings, since she has contributed as much as he to the capital. If the French law is far from according to woman her just rights, in the matter of guarantees, she has, at least, the satisfaction of knowing that the frequent distressing scenes over housekeeping and dress accounts,

which dog the footsteps of many a wife in England, are obviated by the reason that she is spending her own money.

It is difficult, no doubt, on moral grounds, to defend the selection of a future mate in life by circumstances of fortune and suitability rather than the natural instinct of a man, which is supposed to prevail in England; but the custom of marrying where money is, is not unknown with us, nor does it tend to married unhappiness where it does exist. There is something to be said for the system which gives security to the "*bien être*" and safeguards the dignity of the household from the disaster and even moral degradation that so often follow the loss of fortune. Then, again, the close union of families which, in France, results from intermarriage, imposes certain moral restraints which, however irksome to the marital temperament, do not, as far as I can judge, turn out badly. The freedom of the married woman is, certainly, sharply contrasted with the constant parental surveillance of the young girl. Though (as I show elsewhere) there is a tendency to break down the Chinese Wall of convention, it is not as general as some would have us believe.

The saving habit, early inculcated, is another cause which, whilst it leads to unlovely economy, has a binding and, in a certain sense, restraining influence in family life. It has been said that everything is preordained in France except the traffic, whilst in England nothing is preordained except the police control of the highways. History cannot be left out of any consideration of a people, with the complicated civilization of the French, and their intense thriftiness may be said to be the direct result of the grinding poverty, which weighed upon them in the eighteenth century. It was this poverty which provoked the Revolution—a poverty accentuated by the escape of a



numerous privileged class from taxation. Economic conditions have played the leading rôle ever since, in insurrections in this and other countries. As a rule, a prosperous people are immune from dynastic disturbances, and the long and comparatively calm rule of constitutional monarchy in England results from the fact that the British working classes have been, until lately, in a comparatively better position, materially and morally, than their neighbours on the Continent. That this is no longer true, to-day, or much less true than formerly, provides one of the greatest problems for the future governance of the people in the United Kingdom. The presence of a large mass of unemployed and of unskilled workers, a prey to the uncertainties of existence, may be a reason why an atmosphere of discontent has grown up for which a remedy is sought in various empirical ways. Obviously, unemployment is one of the most important problems with which a Government can deal, and there is nothing more dangerous for the tranquillity of a community than poverty in its most hopeless and degraded form.

Outward circumstances change the character of a people to an extraordinary and unexpected extent. It cannot be doubted that a profound change in the temperament of the French has resulted from their reverses in 1870. They lost their light-heartedness and gaiety of spirits at Sedan and they have not recovered them since. The modern Parisian has neither the expansiveness nor the good humour of his forbears. A Frenchman of the older school is a totally different being in character from his successors to-day. The stranger is struck with the reserve that meets him everywhere in Northern France, and, if the Méridional has kept something of his exuberance, he has, in the process, estranged himself from the rest of his countrymen, with the result that there is as great a

temperamental difference between a Northern and Southern Frenchman as between a German and a Southern Italian. Frenchmen are no longer as communicative and as free in conversation as before the War; they have imbibed something of the phlegm of the Briton and Teuton. The modern German is much more boastful and aggressive than the modern Frenchman. Reticence towards the stranger has contributed to a loss of charm in France, and one is struck by the seriousness of the people.

On the other hand, the English appear to have grown more frivolous, more addicted to pleasure, than aforetime, whilst they have added immeasurably to their outward graces. Real politeness is much more common in England than in France. This is not to say that the Frenchman has grown impolite, but that he keeps his manners and his ceremonial usages for his own kith and kin. His treatment of a lady to whom he has not been introduced is often curiously casual. The stranger is no longer welcomed with effusiveness and, indeed, is chilled sometimes by an apparent lack of appreciation of his society. The native-born Frenchman is inclined to distrust everything. He is suspicious. This is seen in his business operations, which are safeguarded with astonishing precautions. Non-speculative and un-enterprising by instinct and training, he invests his savings only in gilt-edged securities; Government bonds of all denominations attract him. For this reason he has become the money-lender of the world. Comparatively few of his savings go in enterprises at home or abroad where the slightest risk exists. His own industries often languish for want of funds. There are undeveloped tracts in France containing mineral wealth which might, reasonably, be exploited if there were more adventure among the commercial and moneyed classes. But this very exaggeration of prudence has caused Prudhomme to

turn banker for the more industrially-developed nations or for the smaller States whom he can dominate with his capital. Thus, France has a voice in the affairs of the world, because of her solid interests in other people's concerns, and apart from her own political position. Her influence is in no small measure due to the expatriated wealth of the "rentier."

In England, the tendency is to concentrate large masses of capital in few hands. This is apparent in all bond issues. British Consols can only be held, except as Post Office savings, in packets of £100, which fact is largely responsible for their low price, whereas one-fourth of a £20 Municipal Bond is a common form of investment among the saving poor in France. To such a length is this principle carried that a person subscribing for one to five shares in France in any concern of high guarantee is certain to receive his allotment. The tendency of French finance is to increase the number of shareholders instead of limiting it as in England, where preference is given to the application of the wealthy capitalist.

A Frenchman's suspiciousness betrays itself in all social and commercial relations. If a man is invited to dinner by a host whom he does not know intimately, he will immediately suspect an ulterior motive. "What does he want to get out of me?" he asks himself. He does not comprehend the open-handed hospitality of the English, who throw wide their doors to strangers with the facility with which a Frenchman leaves his card upon you. Foreigners of long residence in France, even if they are personally liked, rarely have an opportunity of seeing a French home, and this strange exclusiveness is still persisted in, notwithstanding the great growth of business relations between the two countries and a large exchange of official and semi-official civilities and entertainments.

Unless the Englishman marries into a French family, or is able to serve a Frenchman in some way, he rarely sees him in his own private and intimate surroundings, but must be content with rather superficial and perfunctory entertainment either at a large At Home or in a restaurant. The Frenchman's reluctance to take strangers into his confidence and introduce them to the society of his wife and children is based largely on his instinctive rule to do nothing without guarantees and substantial pledges of bona-fides.

The absence, to a large extent, of advertisements in newspapers is due to the knowledge of the tradesman that his public is sceptical and cannot be reached in that way, and, above all, resents the assumption that it is naive or a "poire." The self-praise that is no recommendation raises in the breast of the ordinary French reader a feeling that chicanery or fraud is afoot. The louder the "réclame," the more certain is he that the goods are worthless or inferior. This is one of the reasons why "American methods," as they have come to be called, make little headway in the native business world of Paris. The French Thomas Didymus must have his doubts set at rest by material proof. The pictorial poster has a certain vogue, but here the appeal is different—the artistic side predominates, more especially when the work is signed by some well-known draughtsman.

There remains the question which we set out to discuss: the comparative morality of two peoples. Are the French more moral or less moral than the English? A recent play by Brieux, entitled "La Française," castigates the foreigner who supposes that every Frenchwoman is "facile," ready to be debauched from loyalty to her husband. Though there is no greater libel on the large mass of Frenchwomen, the existence of this assumption is not wholly the fault of

the foreigner. The inhabitants of France take a morbid pleasure in detracting from their own virtues, and in painting themselves black. Whereas the Englishman is apt to assume moral qualities that he does not possess, out of a hypocritical regard for his neighbour's opinion, the Frenchman is just as anxious to show himself "a bit of a dog," because this is a passport to popularity amongst certain of his compatriots. He boasts of his conquests, real or imaginary, with the gusto of a sportsman recounting his bag or the fisherman his tally of fish. But this, of course, is not the case with the best class of man. Such braggart estimates in the one field or the other are to be taken with more than a grain of salt; sometimes they are wholly illusory. The most quiet Frenchman will, under certain circumstances, avow himself a perfect demon for pleasure of a questionable sort, though appearances, as well as his private reputation and consistently laborious life, are evidence to the contrary. His habit to represent himself worse than he is and to laugh, as if in sympathy, at the follies of others is partly inspired by a wish to vary the monotony of the Realities by flirting with the Forbidden. He is a child playing with moral fire and liking to appear brave. Yet, in his ordinary conduct, he is, probably, no worse a man than the citizen of any other country.

Elsewhere I have remarked on his coldness; his lack of sickly sentiment places him in another category from the English. Who can read the cheaper English fiction without coming to the conclusion that there is a mass of our countrymen and women, whose tastes are most rudimentary, whose perceptions of life are nil, and whose insistence on pleasant endings, in defiance of all probabilities, marks a state of mind wanting in artistic sincerity? Whilst there is a number of French publications, whose



coarseness and obscenity are matter for wonderment in so cultivated a community, there are periodicals such as the "*Annales Littéraires et Politiques*," which have a high general tone and, in the literary nature of their contents, are far beyond anything of the kind produced in England. Even in the worst of the illustrated hebdomadal Press, there is the excuse of wit. There is, happily, for the country, no snippets public in France. The height of St. Paul's Cathedral and the weight of its roof gutters ; the length of the great North Road ; how to grow cabbages on flannel aprons and other strange information may be quite harmless, morally, but its weekly consumption by the British reader must surely contribute to the growing insanity.

The entertainments given in French music-halls—particularly in the Provinces—are often unspeakably gross, and must be a source of contamination to the young. Here, again, there is segregation of the sheep from the goats, and, generally speaking, the young girl, as well as her young brother, is debarred from these spectacles. The freer life of the English girl would hardly be possible in Paris, to-day, even impregnated, as it is, with Anglo-Saxon influences ; but there is growing up a tendency to provide a middle sort of entertainment, which is comparable with the fare provided by the London music-hall, and contains nothing of offence to the young person. In course of time, doubtless, the unmarried French lady will be as enfranchised as her married sister—able to move without remark through the streets ; this is already true to a certain extent, though demanding considerable circumspection on the part of the lady, especially if she is young and attractive. A contributory cause to this wider freedom of the sex is the wish and necessity of unprovided females, or even of the dowered girls of the

Bourgeoisie, to earn their own livings and carve out their own careers.

The ordinary "*pièce à thèse*," as well as the novels of the most fashionable writers, gives the foreigner the impression that chastity and fidelity in the domestic circle are the rarest virtues. It is singular that scarcely anyone of talent has arisen to paint the ordinary Frenchwoman, the woman of the country: laborious, thrifty, a model wife, concerned exclusively with the up-bringing of her family and the affairs of her husband, entering with zest into his business life and superintending, with minute care, the expenditure of the household, as well as every operation of the counting-house. The most capable woman in Europe, Madame Dupont—the type of the middle-class—is amongst the most virtuous. Nor has one ever challenged her devotion to husband and children. Even on the question of divorce, there is much to be said for the French point of view. Is it better to continue to cohabit when there is no love, or to separate in an attempt to reconstitute one's life? French people, except those who are consistent Catholics, adopt the latter view and say (just as do many Americans) it is preferable to recognize, frankly, the impossibility of a domestic situation and make a fresh start instead of continuing an arrangement which condemns two people to a life of subterfuge, and provides the spectacle of a ménage disunited upon all essential points. The frequency of divorce in France and America so often deplored by religious people may be—may it not?—a sign, not of lower morality but of higher perceptions. An undoubted reason is the inexpensiveness of the process in both countries, whereas in England the cost of separation, in the full legal sense, averages £200—a figure quite impossible for the lower middle class. The Church people, of course, will not admit of the possibility of divorce, marriage being a

sacrament in their eyes ; but Church leaders either in France or England have never been distinguished for a frank recognition of the difficulties of everyday existence, but have contented themselves with applying formulæ whether they represent a real remedy or not. An English bishop, lecturing on the declining birth-rate, tells the men to shoulder parental responsibilities—on £1 a week?—and the women to abjure political aspirations and return to their home circles. Such words exhibit a certain courage in the twentieth century, but they cannot be said to offer a real solution of a great difficulty. Having tasted the larger life of political action and the freedom that comes from professional careers, in which men have hitherto been dominant, women are not likely to content themselves with the restricted horizons of their own homes, having, for the sole occupation of their intellects, the varying whims of their husband, or the measles of their children. Evidently, a new Gospel is required, less flattering to masculine complacency.

French public opinion recognizes, more intelligently, the right of women to emancipation, and each day new triumphs are pinned, like rosettes, to the Phrygian cap of Marianne.

The moral aspect is inseparable from the question of the sexes. Elsewhere I attempt to prove that the Frenchman is more carnal in his manner of looking at women ; the Englishman is more correct and colder in his appreciation of feminine charms. The latter leaves his wife largely to her own society, whilst he betakes himself to his club ; the former cannot imagine existence without woman—some woman—though his fidelity to the marriage bond is probably less pronounced than that of the Englishman. Still, he is a delightful companion to the sex, and is too clever a man to adopt that curious

attitude of superiority to which Englishmen are prone in conversation with the "weaker vessel." The Latin is a more imaginative creature, more adaptable, better able to place himself in the position of another; the Englishman, on the other hand, is more rigid in his principles, unbending, kind but firm, the genial master, but the undoubted master of his own household. Judged, exclusively, from the point of view of the race, it may be well that a woman should take second place, occupying herself largely with domestic duties and the care of the household; it is this acknowledged inferiority of the sex which has contributed, in some measure, to the dominance of Germany to-day. At the same time, it has its dangers, this calm egoism—dangers which outweigh the advantages that seem to come from unchallenged masculine supremacy. The Americans, whose progress in the world is made with giant steps, treat their women with greater gallantry and deference than the English, and yet they have not lost, apparently, their virtue of virility.

There are signs, however, of matriarchy in America, where, practically, the education of the country is in the hands of women; there are also signs of it in France, but here it is complicated by the thousand shadings of an old civilization. The great difference between the French-woman and any other is her insistence on remaining feminine. Nothing can be more regrettable from the sex point of view than the strong-minded creature who has lost all charm or attraction for man; but women with the same advanced views in France will have retained that secret of their sex which is more powerful than argument and defies analysis. It is their magnetism that makes them invincible. The unruffled hair of the "caissière" in a French shop, the perfect manners of the "patronne" of one of the many establishments run by women, are

fascinating and puzzling phenomena in the rise of women to economic independence.

And yet justice compels me to say that the loss of feminine charm in England, to which I have just alluded, is directly traceable to the stupidity of my own sex. The Englishman is hard to convince ; a charge of dynamite is necessary to let in the new idea. If proof were needed, you have it in the strange reluctance of political parties in England to face facts—glaring facts as to the necessity of a continental army, and of dealing with overwhelming destitution by adopting a fiscal system in consonance with universal experience. The party which is nominally the most advanced in England is more conservative than any other in its adherence to an exploded political thesis—exploded, not because of its inherent falsity, but because the circumstances in which it was born have radically altered. The Englishman, then, is a stubborn creature, and requires strong argument for his brain, just as he requires strong drink for his palate. The Suffragettes declare that a woman must die for the cause before it is really established ; in any case, it is clear that in no other country but England would such strange and forceful methods have been necessary to set up a new elective principle. Actors in the movement have been affected by the difficulty of their task, and instead of relying upon their own potent and highly effective weapons of womanly persuasion, have sought the primitive club in the arsenal of man.

In considering the economic position of women in France, we are faced with this inconsistency, that whilst, as I show later—in a chapter dealing particularly with this question—Parliamentarians and the élite of the nation are favourable to the Women's Cause and write eloquent articles in the newspapers in support of it, there is a



reluctance to pay the female worker a living wage, or at least one equal to that paid to man for the same class of work. This is particularly true in industries connected with luxuries. The work-girls in the dressmakers' establishments are notoriously ill recompensed. Two francs fifty centimes, the scale for the ordinary sewing woman, cannot be considered adequate remuneration for a working day of from eight to ten hours. The question of the emancipation of the sex can never be settled until women are paid in proportion to their services, or, at least, on a footing of equality with man. Without going as far as the Socialists, who claim wages for the wife engaged in household work, one must feel that if the sex is to continue to make progress, it must be fairly dealt with in the labour market.

And this question concerns conduct. How is a girl to be moral, to preserve her dignity as a woman, if honest labour yields her an insufficient livelihood? The reply of employers of labour, when faced with this problem, is that they employ girls who are not wholly dependent upon them and who live with their parents or are otherwise provided for. But this is a hypocritical disclaimer. Only those who wilfully disregard facts can fail to see that the semi-prostitution which exists in Paris, to an extent unknown in London, is directly due to the failure of young women to obtain independence by honest labour. The "ami," the "amant" becomes an economic necessity.

The subject is complicated by other considerations. Amongst the Latins the call for intercommunication and companionship amongst the sexes is much more strongly felt than amongst the Anglo-Saxons. The idea of celibacy is abhorrent even to the most intellectually enfranchised Frenchwoman, suggesting a life of incredible loneliness and, also, reflecting upon her personal charm

and her ability to inspire the admiration of the opposite sex. She does not understand the bachelor existence of so many Englishwomen—an existence not forced upon them by the material fact of being unable to marry, but from deliberate choice and from a wish to lead an independent life. The biggest “*bas bleu*” in France never supposes her intellectual attainments to be any bar to marriage, to a common life with the man she loves. Here is a vast difference in the sentimental attitude of the two nations. The one can, apparently, live without the companionship of the opposite sex, the other cannot. Such a fact affects the mental outlook of the people, their disposition towards life. Glance out of your window at the crowds in Paris, and you see more couples than is ever the case in London. The man who forms a self-conscious escort to his wife or sweetheart or sisters in London is the exception; women do their shopping alone. Who ever heard of an Englishman offering to help his wife in the choice of a hat or furbelow? He would be laughed at, as effeminate. Even *she* would despise him and tell him to play golf. But intimate co-operation of the sort is frequent in France, where the man is called in to decide nice points of colour, to approve the correctness of line, to testify to the proper fall of a skirt. If he is not more effeminate, the Frenchman is vastly more in touch with the concerns of his wife; he enters into her little joys and sorrows, her feminine perplexities, with an acuter knowledge of the feminine mind and its special requirements than is ever possessed by the sturdier John Bull, who has never got out of his head that woman is slightly inferior and only brought into the world as an afterthought by the Creator.

Frenchmen cannot live alone; there must always be an Eve in their paradise. The bachelor party, which is a

common feature in English social life, is unthinkable in France. How can men enjoy themselves without women? Woman *is* their enjoyment. It is only the cold Englishman who wants to leave his wife at home, whilst he banquets or plays golf. The Frenchman's first essays in the royal and ancient game are always accompanied by a feminine retinue: his wife, his aunt, and his mother-in-law. It is only when he makes progress in the game and realizes the niceties of its etiquette, that he consents to separate himself for an hour or two from feminine society. Unless he plays advanced golf, he will always prefer his wife's society on the links to that of a man. This is why club life is impossible in Paris, except club life of a special sort, involving baccarat for high stakes, and appealing to a rich and leisured class. Yet, here, compensations are offered to the offended goddess, momentarily abandoned, whilst her husband goes to the "tripot." She is invited to weekly theatrical entertainments at the clubs—entertainments provided for, by the way, by the card-money squandered by the men. And the exhibitions of all sorts that flourish at the clubs—nearly every one has some artistic mission—are so many occasions for the mingling of the sexes.

This explanation of the perpetual inclination of Frenchmen and women towards each other is necessary when we are considering morality. We, in England, are apt to associate purity with coldness, but the absence of desire is no virtue. It points to something abnormal, to a lack of mental endowment, to a paucity of imagination. The rich creativeness of the French people, their glorious achievements in art, expressed in the embellishments of their beautiful capital, are so many signs and symbols of exuberant sex relationship which finds expression in plastic and pictorial forms. Art and life are inextricably bound—there can be

no art without love, and scarcely a temperament without the sense of the fuller life. The people who suggest that France might now turn to Protestantism and possibly to Nonconformity, since they have broken with the Catholic Church, fail to realize what a wide hiatus there is between the Anglo-Saxon and the Latin, between the essentially Protestant and the essentially Catholic. One might go further and show the close relationship of religion, in its outward forms and symbolism, with art: the art of the early days of piety, when a Christian enthusiasm showed itself in the construction of beautiful and God-given cathedrals, when a Raphael and a Michael Angelo transferred the face of angels and heavenly cherubs to their canvas. In the same way, there is distinctively a rich creative period in England when new religious impulses were stirring, and a dull and repellent period, when those impulses seemed to be disappearing, leaving only a deposit of religious intolerance and sectarian bitterness. Art and a narrow nature cannot go together: the Puritan horror of art is proof of it. Hence, bound up in the particular temperament of the French, their regard for sex, and their exaggerated worship of the human form is their pre-eminence in artistic matters.

This pre-eminence, however, seems challenged at the present time by England and Germany, if not, to some extent, by America. To the growing materialism, of which I treat in the pages of this book, may be due the decline in those qualities in the French, which made them produce wonderful things, and the same causes, which contribute to the social and political stagnation, may, and undoubtedly do, operate unfavourably upon art, exalting the clever and mechanical above true inspiration.

The unspiritual conception of women, which belongs to the Frenchman's reading of sexual difference, sometimes

grates upon the sensitiveness of colder northern minds. Yet, familiarity with the other sex protects from those abysses into which the rash and inexperienced feet of the Englishman may lead him. By dint of practice, the Frenchman can walk with surer steps upon the precipices of a passion which tends to overwhelm the Englishman. The melting of snows upon the mountain top causes a torrent which sweeps away every obstacle in its path. Obviously, the inner life of the Englishman, who can exist without feeling any urgent necessity for female companionship, must differ vastly from that of the Frenchman who, at the dawn of manhood, provides himself with female society. Some idea of the conception of the two nations on delicate matters of this sort may be gathered from reading the pages of "Sapho," which was certainly penned by Alphonse Daudet with no idea that he was writing an improper book. "*A mes fils quand ils auront vingt ans.*" Evidently the author, when he wrote that dedication, felt that the moral of the book would be useful to every young man. An English parent would have preferred that his children should have lived in ignorance of such questions until, at least, much later in life.

From conversation at table, from the fact that he is always with his parents and overhears their daring discussion of all topics, rarely checked because of his presence, the French boy early becomes acquainted with those problems of life—and provides his own precocious solution of them—upon which blue-eyed English children look with unseeing innocence. The fact that so few doors are marked "Private" in France makes social intercourse alluring and stimulating, awakens trains of thought and forces the talent; at the same time this very openness of discussion, this tendency to "*tout dire*," is dangerous to the unprepared. Virgin soil, if it produces richer fruits, also produces



ranker growths than land which has been tilled a thousand years.

Business ethics cannot be dissociated from any discussion of moral behaviour. Have the French a less nice sense of honour and strict honesty when they are dealing with affairs, with questions that involve money interests? Comparisons are odious; a too pronounced desire to probe may become invidious; at the same time, truth constrains me to say that the mass of French business people, whilst perfectly honourable in keeping engagements—the French Government through all its vicissitudes has always fulfilled its obligations—are, at the same time, less mindful of their word than the Englishman. It used to be said that an Englishman's word was as good as his bond. Though I fear there is some deterioration from this high standard, it is still apparent to all who know the two nations well that the Englishman will abide by an unlucky bargain when he has given his word, whereas the Frenchman is apt to revise his opinion on the morrow—if his agreement has not been put into writing. In the past, before the days of the *Entente Cordiale*, English Ambassadors in Paris had constant difficulty in settling the preliminaries of any diplomatic instrument, for the reason that the Foreign Minister of the day was apt on the morrow to go back upon his expressed intention of the day before. To the French mind, this is not dishonesty or want of strict honour; it is merely a business habit which must be understood as such. The Englishman is reluctant to give his word even when it means mere politeness. He hesitates long before he makes a promise; but when he has made it, he hesitates longer before he breaks it. With a Frenchman, to speak is as easy as to breathe; he is naturally expansive when discussing a business affair—it is his method of arguing it out, of

getting all round it. But unless he gives his signature, his verbal undertakings amount to very little. He does not mean to convey a wrong impression; the habit is constitutional, it springs from a chronic inability to make up his mind. A famous Frenchman said recently, in reference to his retirement from a high public office: "Whatever decision I take, I know I shall regret it on the morrow." That is characteristic of the national habit; it is a mental bias that has to be accepted by those who wish to do business in France.

Again, there is an unfortunate tendency, especially among the smaller "commerçants," to cheat the foreigner, to get as much as possible out of him. One is immediately struck with that on arriving in France. There are two prices in the shops: one for the English and Americans, the other for other people. The first figure is twice as high as the second. The foreigner is often annoyed by attempts to get the better of him, exhibited by waiters, "cochers" and kiosk keepers, who charge him double, give him bad money, or render incorrect change. One likes to think that these things do not happen in England; they are less general, but I am afraid they do happen. A French lady, knowing no English, told me that recently she took a cab from Charing Cross to an address at Earl's Court—a fare of half-a-crown. She gave the cabman a sovereign and awaited the change, explaining what she wanted by signs. The cabby gave a sharp look at his fare, whipped up his horse, and disappeared round the corner. A distinguished Japanese, coming to London for the first time as a poor lad, bought bread at a baker's shop in the East End, near the Docks, and tendered a sovereign. The tradesman kept the sovereign and hustled the lad out of doors with his penny loaf.

I have said that the Frenchman delights in painting

himself blacker than he is. He takes a rhetorical interest in being perverse. His attitude may be compared with the Socratic method of asking questions, not so much to hear the answer as to debate the subject in one's own mind. The French Intellectual is always a rhetorician, setting up academic ninepins to knock them down. He loves the general principles, whereas your more positive Englishman has "no use" for them. He wants facts and a concrete instance, whilst the Latin mind tends towards the general theory: he must state a case and argue about it. This fondness for discussion, this perpetual eagerness for analysis, this desire to probe things to the bottom, to carry a matter to its logical conclusions make conversation extraordinarily interesting and life in France a perpetual feast to the intellectually alert. At the same time it has its dangers, particularly to the not over-bright person who takes everything "*au pied de la lettre*," and imagines that he is in the midst of the most disquieting symptoms of decadence.

The mocking spirit is very near in any Frenchman's conversation. He indulges in "*persiflage*," in the bandying of words, in the examination of all aspects of a question with the relish and enthusiasm with which the young generation in England gives itself to sport. To him it is a needed exercise to get rid of his superfluous energy: he finds new strength and refreshment in these passages of arms, in these conflicts with words. Thus, he gives utterance to opinions which are not really his, merely for the pleasure of shocking, to hear the remonstrance, the excited disclaimer. This acts as a stimulus to his own brain; he finds nothing more enjoyable. The mental habit explains a great deal, explains much in books and plays that grieves the superficial observer of the French. "What? Is it possible that a people can hold such

theories and be accounted respectable, or even sane?" The critic fails to observe the undercurrent of satire or the pure mischief of the writer, who is out to relieve his summer energy with a little idol-smashing.

Intellectual iconoclasts abound in France. They are ever busy with axe and hammer destroying the cherished images of the past; and the greatest of them all was Voltaire, who died, miserably, as we know, watched over, as a prisoner might be, by two avaricious relatives, who were afraid that his fortune should escape them and were determined that his person should not. Here you have the tragedy of a great "moqueur," the man who made everything the butt of his ridicule, who dulled the bright surface of religion, of the kingly power, of the things that men had held sacred. He is the great Sower, the great Apostle of the Revolution, and yet he dies like this, on his own Quai Voltaire, like a rat caught in the trap of the most demoralizing passion of man. In Zola's "La Terre" we have a terrible picture of the peasant "grippe-sou," who will squeeze out life and love for the sake of money. And yet one must not lose sight of his almost sublime passion for the rich brown soil, which is to him Fecund Nature. He will hold and keep his land against all comers, and it is this determination which gives him a savage courage to labour the year through. Avarice, however, is the curse from which the French, with all their extraordinary intellectual resources, their brilliance of mind and real achievements in the arts and sciences, are unable to escape. It colours many of their actions, otherwise inconceivable. And yet, side by side with the unlovely miser, the economizer at all costs, is a lower middle class distinguished for much kindness of heart, much comprehension of the neighbour's position, much practical sympathy.

Then, again, where is the people whose recognition of talent, unaccompanied by worldly wealth, is more generous? "My respect rises with every step I mount," said a famous Frenchman when visiting Guizot, then a Minister of France, and inhabiting a fifth floor. A distinguished French Admiral of European reputation lives as near the roof as that, and with an entire absence of ostentation. Simplicity and elegant poverty often accompany real intellectual distinction in this country. "I have to leave England to find my self-respect" would never have been uttered by a French scientist; he is always respected.

So, you see, there is a complexity in the French character that is not easily defined. I think you must not divorce it from any consideration of French morals. The Frenchman is a complicated creature and has a complicated moral system. He thinks it wrong or, at least, useless to flirt. The "demi-vierge" or "allumeeuse," not unknown in English latitudes, is castigated by Marcel Prévost, who expressed the judgment of his countrymen when he wrote his famous novel. Honest Frenchwomen do not play with the passions. They are either swept off their feet by a sudden great love or they deliberately enter upon a certain course from want of principle or because it provides an easy life. They do not understand the point of view of the woman who sets out to make conquests, to break men's hearts, merely to while away a summer's day. When they enter upon the field of amatory experience, they are either blinded to the results by an overwhelming passion or their eyes are open, foreseeing the end and counting the cost. It is from the lack of comprehension of the Anglo-Saxon view that Frenchwomen often refuse to credit the English or American woman with virtue, and, indeed, accuse her of a cold hypocrisy because her evident object is to enjoy herself to the utmost in masculine society, always with the



determination to save herself at the last ditch. Such an attitude of final reservation is not possible in the case of a Frenchwoman, who, however, is prepared to go to lengths undreamed of by Englishwomen, when her affections are really engaged. The women who have lovers, however, the women of the novels and the plays, are those of a certain set in large towns and are not typical in any way of provincial France. The ordinary Frenchwoman should be defended from literary calumny. In the desire to give us life with a big L, authors often submit travesties of the truth and the grossest libel upon their countrywomen.

Costume, though it is not generally recognized, plays its part in the moral Cosmos. Paris fashions are alluring, "provocateur," troubling in the "line," the accentuation of the silhouette. An undefined challenge is thrown down by the Parisian "elegante." You never find the same sensational appeal in Englishwomen's clothes. The absence may mark a greater modesty—at any rate, a less daring attempt to catch the eye. Marcel Prévost, in one of his delightful articles, declares that the object of feminine garb is to awaken the interest of drait man. The male is an absent-minded beggar who, absorbed in his own egotistical ambitions, is unmindful of the female and her embellishments, unless his eye be attracted thereunto by the "mise en scène," the constant change of frame. There is, thus, a closer relationship between morality and clothes than is indicated by the circumstance that in the days of innocence and purity our first parents wandered unclothed in Eden.

French fashions are seductive because they heighten women's charms. The Englishwoman's large indifference to fashion—the little time she spends before the mirror, her absence of coquetry—comes possibly from a moral objection to female vanity and from a desire to make her

appeal to man intellectual—a question, perhaps, of mental attachment, or, at least, a wholesome physical attraction depending in no wise upon arts and wiles and meretricious aids. But the Frenchwoman is differently constituted. She thinks in clothes, and passes long hours in the confection of her toilette. The result, certainly, is something that puts to blush the Englishwoman's efforts in the same direction. It is not the clothes she wears, but the manner of her wearing them, that is so striking, so characteristic, so full of message to the male.

Clothes, then, play a large part in this question of relative morality. I do not say that the Frenchwoman is less moral than the English because she spends more time on the arrangement of her toilette, but I say that, rendering herself more attractive, she exposes herself to a greater danger; she heightens the stimulus with consequences that may threaten her peace of mind, whilst, at the same time, they will flatter her desire for conquest.

Herein appears another aspect of the question. Homage to women of the two nations is differently expressed. To an Englishwoman of respectable upbringing there is something frightening in being followed in the street; she has a horror of the overture. It seems to her to show a lack of respect, to place her on a level with the "facile," the too easily approached. It is an insult to her womanly pride, a detraction from her virtue. Not so the Frenchwoman. Homage is homage, and, though she will equally repel the stranger, she will not feel her "amour propre" injured thereby; on the contrary, she will experience a secret glow of pleasure at the thought that her charms have been sufficient to evoke this unsolicited tribute of the street. You observe the point of view; how different it is. It tinges everything. It is the arbitrator in this great question of clothes. Englishwomen dress because they must, with just

a vague impression that this or that colour, this or that hat will please the male upon whom their happiness in life partially depends. The Frenchwoman makes no secret of her concern when her best sartorial efforts are unappreciated by her companion in life. To her, admiration is as essential to existence as breath in the nostril, as sunshine to the flower.

Then there is the morality of politics. In her international relations, France has always been singularly high-minded. Governments may succeed one another, dynasties fall and be replaced by other regimes, but the French national honour is unassailable. And France shows courage, too. Take, if you will, the rehabilitation of Dreyfus. Here was a man whom half the country still believed to be guilty; but Parliament resolved to annul his condemnation, to restore technically his good name, and to reinstate him in the army. And it had the courage of its convictions. Frenchmen usually have; they are ready, in the habitual phrase, to stand behind a barricade in defence of their principles. And so public honour was done the man who had been publicly dishonoured, whose hair had been whitened by a horrible accusation and by false imprisonment. And yet, considered individually, the French deputy is not conspicuous for high moral courage or for a deep sense of responsibility. Mingle with his kind in the *Salle des Pas Perdus*, or in the corridors of the Chamber, and you will hear many expressions and see many significant smiles in the haze of cigarette smoke, which suggest that the elect of the people does not always take his duties to his country very seriously. He is a sort of local servant, sworn and well-paid, to carry out the wishes of the electorate. It was this indifference to the public weal—particularly illustrated in the growth of the “*fonctionnaire*”—which inspired the cry for Proportional Representation and led

to the substitution of the "scrutin de liste" for the "scrutin d'arrondissement." It was the feeling that perhaps loftier motives would be instilled into the breast of the people's representative if his election depended upon departmental influences rather than upon the "esprit du clocher" or parochial caucus. Though as member of the family of nations France is nearly irreproachable, I think that, man for man, her members of Parliament will not compare in political morality with their British confrères at Westminster.

The deputy has his peculiar conception of the rôle. He is there, first and foremost, to serve the people who sent him to the place; he must urge the local interest above the patriotic interest, and he often does, with the result that budgets grow larger and larger, the National Debt increases by leaps and bounds and the area of political corruption spreads. In the same way, the newspaper proprietor in France regards every corner of his property as a gold mine, in which no possible piece of quartz is to be omitted from the crushing machine. Thus, those parts of a newspaper which in England are regarded as disinterested—at least it was so until quite recently—the financial and the editorial columns, are delivered over frankly to a money-making speculation. A most fruitful source of publicity in a French journal is the Stock Exchange information which, conveyed in the form of notes to the investor, is so much paid "réclame" for such and such a company or trading corporation. Many of the "critiques" of the smaller theatres are also paid for. The French are perfectly sensible of the value of good criticism and enjoy it, but they think that the puff "compte rendu" of an obviously second-class entertainment does no harm to anybody. The public must know that it is not "serious," they say. The argument of the newspaper proprietor is:

"Why should I give an advertisement for nothing? This sort of show is not art, but mere money-making." Again, a new conception of the rôle of the newspaper—another point in morality.

What, then, is the general result of these reflections? Are the French worse, morally, than the English? Do they have a less lofty standard of right and wrong? Are they less set upon perfection in human conduct? Are they less inspired by a sense of responsibility towards their fellow-men, duty towards their God? These are questions difficult to answer—again because of the point of view and because of the difficulty of arriving at conclusions. Most people acquainted with France will say that the code of personal honour is less high to-day than it was thirty years ago, but is it not true of other nations? These things can only be established after long and exhaustive inquiry—if they can ever be established. I think it may be said that whilst the individual Frenchman is just as mindful of his honour as the inhabitant of any other country and as the British, he displays symptoms in his mental make-up—and signs of it are everywhere in the nation—that are dangerous and point to deterioration, rapid and sure, unless checked by wholesome reaction. My principal object, however, in this chapter was not to state invidiously that this was moral and the other immoral, but rather to let the reader see that there are two points of view even in the moral code and that the Frenchman holds to one and the Englishman to another. If I have succeeded in doing that, I have done a partial justice to the French people, whose apparent levities and inconsistencies are so little understood by the outsider.



## CHAPTER III

### TENDENCIES IN LITERATURE AND ART

EACH year the Salons of the Artistes Français and Société des Beaux Arts fill the spacious building of the Grand Palais. The exhibition is tremendous. There is something brain-whirling in the contemplation of this enormous output of pigment, this colossal annual effort towards the coloured presentation of the age. Five thousand works of art appear in the "official" Salon, as the exhibition of the Artistes Français is called, and about half that number in the rival society founded by Meissonier some twenty years ago. As one walks through these endless galleries one is oppressed by the feeling of so much labour, so much thought, so many ambitions, expended upon expressing the personality and point of view in terms of paint. What does it all amount to? What is the upshot of it all? Even to paint badly, to paint without inspiration, as a dull and deadly exercise of the hand—a mere experiment in technique, with no real virtuosity—is a difficult performance, and there are hundreds, even thousands, of young people whose work may be thus characterized: work without genius, laborious sometimes, but lacking all spark of the sacred fire. They are the products of the innumerable schools and ateliers which flourish in Paris as in Athens of old. They represent that tendency towards the pictorial and plastic which is the characteristic of to-day. It is a sign, no doubt, of



WORKING FROM THE MODEL IN A LATIN QUARTER STUDIO



decadence that the rising generation should expend so much effort on canvas and in stone and so little in those intellectual directions that make no appeal to the senses. It is a sign, doubtless, of the pagan spirit that so many precious hours are given to the cultivation of the Muses of painting, of sculpture, and of music—the pictorial arts and the art of sound—instead of being consecrated to science and literature of the higher sort. Paris, indeed, is the pagan city, as witness its sculpture. Part of the vogue of the fashionable lecturer of to-day is to be attributed to the desire of people to instruct themselves without trouble, to tread the path of knowledge as a smooth and bright highway—no longer the laborious, rugged ascent of a bare, forbidding mountain.

So we have this monstrous exhibition of mediocrity in those two Salons housed in that grandiose vestige of the Great Exhibition of 1900. There is, certainly, a great lack of freshness, of real talent and originality in much of this display. Low as the British Academy may have sunk in the estimation of the artistic, it can scarcely be more banal, more uninspiring than this exhibition by the Seine. The old pillars of French art are there, yearly represented by their tedious pictures—the instructors of the young painters—but there is a commonplace excellence, a placid rotundity and smoothness about their work, which is irritating because featureless, and pleasureless because deadly monotonous. This man, you may be sure, will choose for ever classical subjects: nymphs bathing in the lake, dryads hiding behind trees, gods and goddesses sheltering in remote forests of antiquity. This other master will assuredly paint landscapes of a languorous sort; eternal moors with eternal heather in eternal bloom; another will persist in military pictures, in compositions of a clever sort, well-arranged but strangely lifeless; yet

another will turn his wooden talents to depict the inner scenes of a dressmaking establishment—fit subject for his palette. A portraitist adopts as sign and symbol of success the society woman. Strange and lissom she is, will-o'-the-wisp-like and looking most unearthly, fiendish with a sort of hot conservatory wickedness—a marvellous piece of painting, but, nevertheless, unreal and meretricious. His rival in the trade of advertising snobs will precipitate portraits of celebrities: a duchess thinly veiled as X or Y, an American millionairess, a bishop much in request in Parisian drawing-rooms, a soldier or a diplomat. And they will wear the same fixed smile and be as impeccably dressed as they are impeccably painted. It is all impeccable, but it is not Progressive Art. There is much to weary and precious little to stimulate in this terrible round of pictures, these miles of paintings through endless corridors. Now and again one is tempted to wonder why a picture is there, it is so good, so striking. One looks at the catalogue: an Anglo-Saxon name, or, perhaps, a Russian.

Americans when they come to Paris often succeed in doing better than their teachers by reason of their virility and enthusiasm. They succeed because of much trying. And there is reason to think that America will be one of the great art lands of the future; first, because so many masterpieces are going there, so many gems from European galleries bought by the rich connoisseur; and secondly, because of the unflinching zeal and devotion shown by the American student in Europe when he comes to study the galleries or to settle, permanently, in such an art centre as Paris or Munich.

Paris has been shaken, somewhat, in her proud confidence of being the art centre of the world, by the discovery that German students are evolving new formulæ in art, new expressions in architecture and design, if not in painting



itself. But, to return to Paris, it would not be fair, of course, to suppose that there is no life or movement in French art because of the want of it in the official and "officieux" salons, because of the deadness of many of the well-known painters. But the really new and living and sincere, as opposed to the mechanical and "pot-boiler," are to be found in the smaller exhibitions rather than in those which receive the visit of the President of the Republic.

People who do not like Republics, declare that they necessarily entail mediocrity, that you cannot expect any real patronage of art or letters, since such things demand taste and aristocratic appreciation, which are to be found in kings and not in presidents. They will tell you that neither art nor religion can flourish in a Republic. However that may be, Bourgeois Presidents are not, probably, the most discerning in the arts, and their opinion on the pictures of the day is, as a rule, only worth remembering as a joke upon the impossibility of officialdom and talent. In these lesser exhibitions, you will often find disquieting originality—symptoms of a desire to express the inexpressible, coupled with a wanton wish, perhaps, to "épater la bourgeoisie." But I admit a liking for the strange eruption of the Autumn Salon. In the same apartments of the Grand Palais, each winter, there is hung a collection of pictures so unusual that the Parisians, in the earlier years, had every reason for regarding them as jokes upon the public. Houses tortured and twisted into mottled mushrooms; trees that have the look of human beings, and human beings of trees: the strangest mixture that childish brains devised. Is it a nightmare, the output of a disordered mind? a hungry cry for bread, or a daring bid for notoriety? One does not know. These young artists hunger, literally, no doubt; they must strike the public eye or they are lost—with no hope of paying the

rent. And so they paint these strange pictures: these crude examples of a naive soul, childish outbursts in which reds and greens and purples are all mixed as if the purpose were some monstrous salad to make the common stomach ill. They feed on noxious diet these young people, and turn from wholesome food.

The high priest of this new school is Henri Matisse, one of the most disquieting of them all. He paints red hobgoblins on a ground of green, dancing some strange exotic round. And yet that same painter can contrive to give to a bunch of flowers such sensation of life that it seems to grow, and you pass near to inhale the perfume, and fear to brush the petals. There is something evidently in the formula. One has little right to quarrel with the artistic point of view; it is the vision that is wanted, doubtless, and not the thing itself, which may be merely vulgar and obscure, with no appeal. And yet, can we say that in these weird manifestations is any new insight into matter, any glimpse of heavenly truth? Personally, I doubt it; but it may be true. At any rate, I have been told that visitors to a leading Impressionist's studio have seen a series of studies in which evolved slowly, and by evident design, the grotesque figures that were afterwards presented as the revelation inspired and distinctive of the artist. Does it not look like trickery, instead of clarified intelligence?

There is an exhibition only a little stranger than the Salon d'Automme; it is the Salon des Indépendants. Here you have rank insanity, mixed with perception. To the "Indépendants" a man sent a picture with the inspiring legend: "Sunset on the Adriatic." An unsuspecting donkey at Montmartre was the real author of that picture. A brush was fastened to his tail, and in the neighbourhood of the tail was placed the canvas. Each time the donkey flicked its caudal member the canvas

received a smear of paint; a collection of these smears formed the scene which afterwards awakened the admiration or, perhaps, the consternation of the public. Independent by name and nature, the Salon is equally so by constitution. There is no Jury and, for a fee of ten francs, all the world may send a masterpiece. The pictures sometimes show an indecency which is past blushing for, and, indeed, these young men put no restraints on their eccentricity.

An exhibition of another sort is the Salon des Humoristes, which justifies its name by giving most amusing examples of the work of caricaturists and comic draughtsmen. There is, also, much humour wrought in wood and wax. Such ingenuity is displayed that one is pained by the thought that much of it can find no market.

These manifestations would indicate a state of mind incompatible with sound art, were it not for one consideration: that by such search and bold experiment the new formula is found. The new school of Impressionists has given us a brilliant galaxy of young men, and amongst them might be mentioned Henri Martin, whose stencilled sunlit decorations are admirable specimens of their kind. By trying, we discover, and by discovery we arrive at great results—sometimes at the renovation of art itself. Thus, hope need not be lost for the future of painting in France. The younger product of the painting school exhibits an almost fiendish desire to break with traditions and with the worn theories of professors, to define fresh paths across experience—paths that lead to lightsome glades and elevated spots, where sun and air play upon the world. Without experiment, without a courageous “*élan*” into the upper atmosphere there can be no progress.

British art grows old, so very old; it crumbles and mumbles in its mute expression of Nothingness. French

art, if it does not grow old, grows tricky and merely clever. The pillars of the Salons are examples of it—men who paint without a soul but with a mastery of legerdemain. This is not the sort of thing that makes for progress, that traces new lines across the unknown. Youth and courage and high endeavour, the new conception and new ideas must be encouraged. That is why strange outbursts in art are not hopeless. On the contrary, they are full of tidings of a new time—full of the spirit that belongs to To-morrow, not resting, merely, upon Yesterday. In England, the new idea is rigidly shut out unless it bears some certificate of authority, some label of respectability. In France they care less for these signs of authenticity. The new avenue is opened to the Pioneer if he will step that way, brave to meet the critic on his own ground. The Impressionists and the wild young daubers of the untrammelled school are the advance guard of the army of To-morrow. They appear ridiculous to the veterans of Yesterday, but they are full of confidence and courage. He who laughs last laughs best.

Official art is deadly. The painting of portraits of Presidents and the depiction of monster mayoral banquets are depressing, representing the negation of all true art.

These remarks apply, with equal force, to the world of literature. The day of great emotions is past: we are getting almost tired of our revolutions. Nothing touches us any more. We refuse to be shocked; we refuse to take things "au grand sérieux." Nothing matters; that is the prevailing tone. Since this is our mental outlook, can we wonder that those who write our books deal with tiny themes that amount to nothing? It would be an exaggeration to say that there is no literature in modern France; but it is no exaggeration to say that the literature of the last half of the nineteenth century will not for a moment

compare with the literature of a bygone age, with the literature of a Balzac. Elsewhere I deal with plays. The play is the thing which reveals the conscience of a people, and the play speaks in terms of actual life, living, palpitating, whilst a book is often a dead thing—ideas imprisoned in a tomb. The play has driven out the book in France. The former appeals to jaded men and women ; it strikes home ; its lessons are instant ; it needs little pondering over because the moral is there, short, sharp, and decisive. But with a book the action is slow, long, and involved. And this generation of aeroplanes and automobiles votes it pedestrian and uninspiring.

Immoral to an intense degree, dealing with perversion, are certain modern efforts to instil interest in the novel. But literature of this sort can, happily, leave no permanent mark, or effect a lasting injury upon the people. It is a passing phase, a symptom of morbid restlessness, rather than a studied effort after popular corruption. Sometimes these books are poisonously true to life, are written with great skill, and attract by the pure beauty of their form. But such things cannot be, they cannot endure, and the taste which tolerates them changes with great speed into something else. It is fortunate that the French are no more steadfast in their vices than in their virtues. Nor, as I prove elsewhere, are people as black as they are painted or as they paint themselves. Being "pot-au-feu" and "terre à terre," the Frenchman loves to imagine himself a Don Juan, a Marquis de Priola, and books of a certain category give him the sensation and illusion he requires.

Great books are dead. Amongst living masters are writers such as Anatole France, whose style is perfect even if his message to the people is no longer vigorous. One can imagine some great artist combining, say, the perfect manner of Anatole France with the curious anatomical



accuracy and brilliant introspection of Henry James. This would be a perfect combination ; but none such exists in contemporary literature. Neither has France a Joseph Conrad, a Kipling, nor scarcely a Granville Barker.

Zola lived, and is dead : a great workman capable even of great artistry, though hiding it beneath a laborious, forbidding style that suggested nothing so much as the implacable intensity of a godless piece of mechanism. Zola is dead, and with him the school of Realists. Romanticism and Realism—the two play “chassé-croisé,” in France ; sometimes the one has it and sometimes the other, in the theatres and in the books. Victor Hugo, with his rhodomontade, his sentimentality and his jingling measures, is driven out of doors by some image-breaker with a Voltairean twist. But he comes in again at the window, when the public wearies of the materialism of the usurpers. Action and Reaction is the law in any country of intellectual progress. Balzac stood in between, extraordinary, monumental, Titanic in his immensity, in his expression of the primitive emotions, of Love, of Jealousy, and of Passion. The days pass and, with them, the authors, and some declare that there is none to write as well as nothing to write about.

Jules Lemaître and contemporary masters of the French language have turned themselves into polite essayists. Marcel Prévost writes agreeably of feminine psychology. Paul Bourget gives us cases of conscience in his books and plays ; René Bazin writes of the “le blé qui lève”—full of the feeling of the earth and of the old spirit of patriotism transplanted ; Maurice Barrès keeps alive the old French sentiment, the racial spirit of the lost Provinces. These are good and praiseworthy things, but they do not palpitate ; they do not touch the nation as a whole. None can do that. The novelists themselves, realizing the force of

the theatre, try to turn their books into plays as the more vivid way of literary expression.

And it must be said that the very speed and mechanical genius of the times are the enemy of imagination, the enemy of those delicate romances which George Sand produced with such amazing fecundity. The eighteenth century was the time of contemplation and mellifluous experience. They were mellow times, times before steam and explosion engines hurtled us through the air, roaring their way through peaceful country-sides, disturbing the echoes of lone woodlands, frightening the peasantry out of their primitive ways. Can you imagine, nowadays, a *Corinne*—Mme de Staël's poetic heroine? She is clearly out of date. No, the romance departs, leaving little that is old—only the new that no one understands.

Perhaps writers like Gabriele d' Annunzio have best seized the spirit of the age. They comprehend contemporary feeling, and so they write about flying-machines and pitch the hero into mid-air, where he may soar towards the sun and experience his untranslatable emotions. These men, at least, appreciate the longing of the mortal to escape from this too solid earth, from this stale reality into the blue where are space and air and sunshine, and the cold silent light of stars. That is the literature of To-morrow: the poetized side of machinery: Jules Verne mixed with imagination: H. G. Wells, philosopher, united to a poet. The French public tire visibly of the romance. They look for their reading to historical events, lightly treated and luminously embroidered by the clever student. Books are in a bad way. Of the classics, Balzac sells; Molière is used for school prizes and recitations; Hugo is out of fashion, and there is none to succeed.

The Académie Française, with its forty immortals, seems only to emphasize the void. The Academicians

labour perpetually at their dictionary, polishing and re-polishing the language, but its vitality has gone: a poor, bloodless anæmic thing, feebly struggling in beautiful phrases to convey beautiful nullity.

Style killeth. Writers are stifled with style. They manage to say nothing at all with stylish simplicity, when true simplicity would keep quiet.

Charles Géniaux is one of the foremost of the young men who have something to say, and he says it with Zola-esque sincerity. His "*Cité de Mort*" is a remarkable piece of work, vibrant with reality and with the things that make for writing; possibly he may emerge from the indifference of the age. I think the most expressive modern movement in letters is attributable to women. Some of the best writers are of the sex of Madame de Sevigné and Madame de Staël. One of the cleverest romanciers is Daniel Lesueur (Madame Henri Lapauze). Another with real insight into feminine aspiration and problems of the hour, and with artistry at her command, is Madame Marcelle Tinayre. Then we have Madame Myriam Harry, remarkable for her pictures of the East and for the strange charm with which she has enveloped the secluded life of the harem. Women realize their opportunities, and are making progress in letters as they will make progress, probably, in the other branches of human endeavour. And why not? The delicate sensibility and the elegant perceptions of many women endow them with just the qualities for novel-writing.

Perhaps the very literary character of the Frenchman's education conspires to keep down talent or, at least, to render less conspicuous the "*chefs d'œuvre*." Every Frenchman seems an orator or a writer, and sometimes both. Grace of language belongs much more to the French than to the English letter-writer. The girl of the

middle classes, writing to her friend, expresses herself agreeably, whereas the same young person in England, if amusing in her fresh girlish way, has vastly less facility of phrase. One marvels, sometimes, and is almost afraid of the tremendous wealth of language, of the real literary skill shown in the drawing up of Parliamentary reports and other documents of official sort, which are apt to be so arid in Anglo-Saxon hands. Here is expended a wealth of good writing, and the result is a book that makes excellent reading, oftentimes as interesting as a novel of adventure. The whole tendency and training of the Frenchman is literary, and, in the schools, what we should consider as remarkable essays are penned by quite young pupils. The result is a high general level of literary expression and a sad vulgarization of precious old classical phrases, which seem to lose their significance by mere force of repetition; but these things do not make great books. Because the vast mass of the people know how to express themselves well, they are not thereby equipped with the inventive faculty necessary for the construction of a creative work. One must touch the heart; one must inflame the mind before one can produce that mysterious chemical compound known as a Great Book. The French have momentarily become exhausted in their literary expression, and have little left to say. All human emotions have found their biographer; there is so little virgin soil left for exploration and analysis. That is, doubtless, why books no longer sell and why there is this literary "slump," which is called "*La Crise du Livre*."

Young Oxford and Cambridge students, who come to Paris to complete their literary studies, often surprise their French teachers by their inability to write an essay. Every French lycean is taught the uses and necessities of the three syllogisms, but the English undergrad knows

little of such mysteries, and writes sometimes with a *naïveté* that is disconcerting, and a paucity of ideas that seems strange to those habituated to the lively imaginations of the younger generation in France. In England, therefore, the writer of a great book has a much bigger chance to be heard and seen since he rises instantly and conspicuously above the common mass. Not so in France, where the common level is much higher, as I have said. You must soar higher to obtain the same result.

And yet comparing literature with literature, one cannot pretend that French exceeds the English in the quality of the talent displayed. Rather should I say—if weighing in the scales were possible—that the balance went in favour of Great Britain. Taine acknowledged the superiority of English poetry over French, and I imagine that an equal authority would give precedence to English fiction, taken in the mass. As to the dramatists, there is certainly no Shakespeare. Molière, wonderful as he is, has not the wide appeal of the man who wrote of all human nature. Nor is there a French Milton. We could go farther and say that Tennyson and Swinburne are lacking, as well as Keats and Shelley. Yet in questions of comparison many elements exist, of which it is necessary to take note: manner of expression, sentiment and subject involved, and a hundred other points. We will leave this controversy with the declaration that England more than holds her own in any comparison with the French in the subject-matter of her books.

But if one takes the actual writing, the form and manner—not the matter—we must give the palm to the French writer. His composition is much superior, and then again he has a greater freedom to say what he will: he is less afraid of convention. He has not before him the hateful vision of the Censor with his blue pencil and



suburban prejudices, striking out the passages that would be hurtful to Peckham. His range is larger, his flight unbroken by the shot that brings to earth. Mrs. Grundy has had a terrific influence on the writing of all English books. Supposing Dickens could have dealt in larger style with the themes of love and passion, his books would, as human documents, have become more valuable, though in their present and more restricted form they are still the most cherished literary possessions of his countrymen and of the English-speaking world.

Very little attention is given to form in writing English. A man, as a rule, says what he has to say in a plain unvarnished way, with few graces. I confess I consider it a less evil than the French way of saying nothing, but saying it with perfect art. This undue attention to form is seen, not merely in literature, but in other regions of artistic expression.

We have already noted that in the yearly Salons cleverness of hand often supersedes sincerity of inspiration. One sometimes wonders whether much study has not made the French artist mad for mere form. In architecture, some twenty years are often absorbed in equipping a man for a career in which he produces, not, alas! masterpieces, but a terrible jumble of the pseudo-classical. And twenty years have been exhausted in preparing for and passing through the Beaux Arts, as well as those final years in the Villa de Medici in Rome—assuming that he has won the coveted "prix," which carries him to the Eternal City and lodges him for three years at the expense of the State. How often is talent killed by so dreadful and persistent a pressure from antiquity. How shall the human inspiration survive all these weighty invocations of a dead past? A man climbs over the backs of the great Masters to a weary realization of his

own imperfections and limitations. Or it may be that, mounted upon the shoulders of his father, he may declare with childish *naïveté*, "See, I am taller than you." The twentieth century, if it boasts in this nursery manner, has as little warrant for it as the child. If the present decade gives signs of a renaissance and of superiority to the last century, it will surely never compare with the eighteenth. Nor is there any portraitist or painter of to-day capable, for instance, of ranking with Chardin, La Tour, Fragonard, Reynolds, Lawrence, Gainsborough, Romney, if we except Sargent in his most brilliant mood.

Supposing we apply tests to current literature, tests of the past, we find no Balzac, no Victor Hugo, even; but a century is not barren in its first decade when it can produce a Rostand and a Maeterlinck. Maeterlinck is not French, having been born in Ghent, but his quarter of a century of work has been passed upon the soil of France in his splendid Norman retreat, where he has produced masterpieces of imagination, of delicate and graceful craftsmanship, of subtle introspection, of deep observation and communion with nature. Whether he speaks of the Bees or the Flowers, his reflections have the cast of the great mind, bending to a great task: the study of the subconscious world. And again, when he leaves the mystery and haunting fear of his earlier days and plunges into "Wisdom and Destiny," one feels that here is a man qualified to teach, imbued with the science and philosophy of life, and worthy to examine into its mainsprings of action. His is a message sober and austere, touched with mystery, deep with hidden meaning, and with face turned towards the Eternal Verities. Whether he introduces us, as in his "Blue Bird," to the symbolism of existence in its search for the unattainable, or deals, as in "Pelléas et Mélisande," with inexorable fate, or whether he talks of

death, claiming that the weakness of the moribund is the cause of its terrors, he has always the sure and profound touch of the deep thinker, not harsh with science like a Herbert Spencer, but gilding his psychic discoveries with the radiant colour of the poet and with the largeness of view of the superman.

A comparison between Rostand and Maeterlinck is scarcely possible, since essential difference divides them. Both are comparatively young men, from whom one may expect further works of power and illumination. Rostand's "Chantecler" is as brilliant a piece of writing, as full of satire, biting and forceful, as Aristophanes' "Birds," or any of the old Greek satirists of the Golden Age of poetic plays. To-day he startles and amazes by the brilliance of his verbal power, by his astounding command of language, the pyrotechnics of his French, the thunder of his periods, his cascades of falling stars. Birds and beasts talk philosophy in his great animal play, and, though some may scoff at the stage production and find it wearisome and wanting, there is none that shall not say it is as wonderful a piece of literary workmanship as ever was. As a pageant and panorama it is glorious, fit to waken in the breasts of all beholders the feeling that here is the man possessing the rich gift of speech to express chivalry in an unchivalrous age, the philosophy of material times, the glittering folly of fools and pundits. Certainly he struck a lofty, patriotic note in "Cyrano de Bergerac," which, for sheer elegance of diction, beauty of expression and magnificence of parade, has scarcely been equalled by any playwright dead or living. Rostand appeared in the firmament just when he was most needed. The world had sickened of the crudities of the Zola regime, of his hard, relentless exposure of the sordidness of life (though in "La Faute de l'Abbé Mauret" and "Le Rêve" he shows ability to touch

and gild with poetic, idealistic brush). Yet, in the main, his work has been disintegrating, exhibiting with ferocious, relentless pride the weaknesses of his country and his epoch. The public, I say, wearied of these things, and hailed with a joy rarely seen in France the advent of a new literary figure, clothed in the romantic costume of days when the "panache" existed and life was not—or seemed not to be—a mere question of ways and means. Rostand came with golden oriflamme, speaking of brave deeds and high achievements, blowing the trumpet of a wild sort of heroism, speaking gay words of high renown and lofty colouring, waking the echoes with a triumphant cry of men who took the great view of Life, who trod upon the earth like gods and waved their swords on high and cried, "Halt and tremble, all ye knaves, and look upon the Sun." It was in heroic phrase he talked and made his actors talk, enveloping the common action with a web of gold, transmuting the dull clay of our existence into something grandiose that seemed to be of Heaven and of the sacred Palladium. Rostand's mission has been to beautify, to exalt, to cause the world to say, "This is the France of other times, made glorious by poets, and electrified by a magician."

Magic and mystery belong to Maeterlinck, but magic also to Edmond Rostand, who, with a mastery such as few contemporaries have of his own rich and varied tongue, invests his characters with an imagery that one has not seen since the days of Shakespeare and the Elizabethan dramatists. Yet neither one nor the other is typical.

What is true, as we have said, of painting, of literature, and of architecture, is true in other branches of art—music and its themes. "*Pelléas et Mélisande*" may serve as an illustration of the new school founded by Debussy,

which supplies a wild, descriptive background of strange and unconventional sounds to the subject it is called upon to treat. Though there is much cleverness in the composition, and much daring in the conception, it is difficult to say what the judgment will be a hundred years from now. Will the new music wear as has done the old? That is the only test. In any case Debussy's "*L'Après-midi d'un Faune*" is a remarkable piece of work, as poetic in treatment as it is in title.

If the epoch is not interesting in the strict sense of art, at least it represents an era of experiments. There is a desire to find new paths, to unearth new secrets, to listen to new songs from the White Mountains of experience, to lay firmer hold of life, to enlarge the borders of perception, and to say: "Nothing shall be inaccessible to my sympathies." The result has not been great, but it is not hopeless. France, least of any nation, need not feel the tragedy of despair, that experience is exhausted, that there is no morrow, no sequel to the story of man's achievement.

No doubt we are far from the time when Hugo's disciples fought in the pit at the Comédie Française with the classical school, though occasionally a band of students at the Odéon or elsewhere will hiss the innovator in the classic grounds of Corneille and Racine. But, in the general trend of things, there is no great enthusiasm for these glories of the past, but rather an impatience to attain to new ends and to leave the dead to bury its dead. Such an attitude may be good or it may be bad; I do not dogmatize. Happily, signs exist that youth is not exhausted, and there is still stimulus to artistic exertion in the great white plain stretched out before every earnest student in the arts, literary, pictorial, or plastic.



## CHAPTER IV

### NEW SOCIAL INFLUENCES

WHILST it is perfectly true that the Entente Cordiale has had a considerable social influence on France, inspiring the young generation to sport, enlarging the horizon of parents, encouraging them to bring up their children, especially the girls, on larger English lines, the traditions of the Roman parent still maintain to a large extent. Though that admirable and enlightened priest, the Abbé Lemire, who sits in the Chamber of Deputies, has added to the Statute Book a law facilitating marriage, it is still the custom for young people to wait for the consent of their parents before leading the partner of their choice to the altar. Until quite recently, neither young man nor woman could marry without the consent of parents until the age of thirty had been reached ; but the latest legislation has reduced the period of incapacity, for both contracting parties, to twenty-one years. However, it is necessary, between that age and thirty, to address an "acte respectueux" to the parents, informing them of an intention to marry. This "acte respectueux" is now limited to a single summons calling upon parents to show cause for the objection. It is becoming more and more rare for the Courts to support parents in their opposition. A case in point is the marriage of M. Casimir-Périer, son of a former President of

the Republic, with Mme Simone, the divorced wife of M. Le Bargy of the Comédie Française. The Courts refused to intervene on the prayer of Mme Casimir-Périer, the mother of the young man.

Yet it requires considerable courage on the part of a son to brave his parents' anger and marry the lady of his own selection. Cases are not infrequent where the door has been closed to the daughter of the family who has persisted in allying herself with a young man whose position or prospects were not considered good enough by the family, or who was objected to for some other reason. In a case which I have in mind, the "dot" was not withheld, but, after the ceremony, the father called a family council and decreed that the name of the offending child should never be mentioned before him. Notwithstanding, or, perhaps, because of the affection they lavish upon their children, French parents find difficulty in forgiving them for an act of disobedience which weakens parental authority. They cannot understand their children's want of appreciation of plans for their own happiness.

Yet, certain new forces are at work, undermining the old order of things—perhaps even loosening the bonds of that wonderful institution, the French family. It is becoming more and more common for a young girl to refuse to marry the young man selected by her parents for social or family reasons and to answer the dictates of her own heart. There is a revolt among the daughters of France against these old customs which bind their will and deliver them into a species of marital bondage. But the "mariage de convenance" is still the rule in society; the term "mariage d'inclinaison" is used and proves what an exception a love marriage is.

The marriage contract is made with the same care and is subject to exactly the same argument as an ordinary

deed of partnership. There is no sentiment in it from start to finish. The tendency, nowadays, especially in the upper circles, is to give the woman direction of her own property. This is secured by a "régime" or series of rules known as the "séparation de biens." It may be compared with the Married Women's Property Acts. The wife has complete management of her property and enjoyment of the income. Such a privilege is not hers under any of the other systems; the husband has usually extraordinary powers to dissipate the wife's property without rendering any account of his stewardship. The community system ("régime de la communauté") is very common. It implies the creation of a separate fund, distinct from the patrimony of either spouse, and composed for the most part of the personal property possessed by the parties at the time of marriage, the income accruing during the marriage, and all real estate purchased within that time. The husband alone administers the property and the law gives him full power to do what he will with it.

Then there is the "régime de non-communauté," in which each party retains his or her own property as a separate entity. The rights of the wife, however, are illusory since the husband has sole control, only subject to a liability to account for the property upon the dissolution of the marriage. Finally, there is the most drastic system of all, known as the "régime dotal." The wife brings all her property to her husband, who enjoys peculiar rights in its disposal. Though the wife remains, nominally, the owner, the husband has power, not only over the personalty, as in the community system, but over the realty as well. He has, therefore, wide opportunities for squandering the property, the wife's only protection being to petition the Courts for a separation of goods on the ground that her dowry is in peril.

It will thus be seen that, unless a "*séparation de biens*" is expressly stipulated, the wife's property remains at the mercy of the husband. This is so in law, but in practice it may not be quite so. There is the lady's family to reckon with, as well as the lady herself, who probably has a very good head for business, like the majority of her sex in France. Though "*mariages de convenance*" are clearly out of spirit with the age, there is something to be said in their favour. The French believe heartily in the truth of the old proverb: "When poverty comes in at the door, love flies out of the window." The distressful cases of improvident marriages so common in England are practically unknown in France, where every girl, even in the poorest circumstances, contrives to gather a "dot" before she unites her fortunes to those of a man. Also, as I insist elsewhere, a certain economic independence is secured to the "weaker vessel" by the fact that she has a considerable stake in the business enterprises of her husband.

Whilst it is quite true that restricting conventions are less strong in the middle classes than heretofore, the higher "*Bourgeoisie*" and the aristocratic remnants of the "*Faubourg*" still resist the inroads of modern ideas. "*Society*," as the word is understood by the "*Gaulois*," is just as narrow in its treatment of girls and just as rigid in its exclusiveness as ever it was. The liberal movement comes exclusively from below. Ninety-five per cent of the marriages are arranged. The engagement lasts six weeks, and the fiancés never see each other alone. One may often hear in Paris "*salons*" the remark, applicable to a charming young girl who is present: "She is very pretty. What a pity she cannot marry, but she has not a centime." Though there are democratic features in French life that do not exist in England, it is rare to find the

members of one social caste intermarrying with another. The aristocrat does not become the husband of the actress. The principal divisions of "society" are "le Monde," that is to say, the more or less authentically ennobled class : the old Faubourg Saint Germain; the "Haute Bourgeoisie," and the "Petite Bourgeoisie." The "fonctionnaires" may be said to constitute a fourth class. The Civil Service regards itself as superior to the rest of humanity, though, nowadays, it includes many diverse elements, such as the staffs of the great departments of State, the Prefects and sub-Prefects, the army of school-teachers, who adopt the odd pose of anti-militarism and Socialism; the enormous postal staff, the police and the railway workers on the two systems controlled by Government. If you add to these the "douaniers," municipal employés and inspectors called into existence by new social legislation, you will have no difficulty in arriving at the total of a million, or one in forty, engaged in the task of administrating the other thirty-nine.

Between the Bourgeoisie and "le Monde" is a great gulf fixed. The Bourgeoisie includes all those engaged in professions or commerce, and is analogous to the middle classes in England. The profession of the law, for instance, is entirely recruited from bourgeois elements on account of the objection of the aristocracy, or the highest society, to serve under the Republic. Prejudice of this sort is slowly disappearing, but there is some real movement in that direction. It is in the literary, artistic, and Bourgeois France that one finds mental stimulus and real social enjoyment. The drawing-rooms of the old "noblesse" are dull to the point of tears. The only service in which the aristocracy will engage is the army and navy, and, to some extent, diplomacy. The officers of the smart cavalry regiments are men of good family. In other branches of the defence forces, however, the spirit is



democratic. One of M. Pelletan's achievements, when ruler of the Republic's navy, was to elevate the dockyard hands at the expense of officers of the old and aristocratic school. In other respects, the enemies of the actual "régime" find their position difficult, as when called upon to aid the civil arm in driving out the Religious Sisters under the operation of the Associations Law.

The most potent cause working for change in the social customs of France is the Girls' Lycée. During the twenty years that secondary education for both sexes has been developed on equal lines, numbers of women have decided that there are other occupations open to them than "the trade of marriage." They realize that, from an educational point of view at least, they are as qualified as their brothers to follow the liberal professions. Women now occupy high posts in the educational world. Numbers graduate each year from the Sorbonne and the universities in the provinces. A certain number of women has become qualified to practise at the Bar, though it cannot be said that, at present, the experiment has been attended with much success, and a still larger number has embraced the profession of medicine. The women, however, who practise the healing art are generally of foreign extraction, Jewish Poland supplying a large number of female students in the medical schools. There is still a prejudice existing amongst women of the better classes in France against adopting a career of this exacting character, which appears, at first sight, to be incompatible with feminine sensibility. However that may be, the sex shows a greater and greater tendency to break away from the old narrow conventions, which prescribed housework and the care of the children as its exclusive duty.

On the lines familiar to England, the Suffragette movement hardly exists in France, but its counterpart is a

solid and defensible thing. It is called "Féminisme," and insists on the right of woman to follow any avenue of employment that may seem desirable to her. It is the claim of woman to work on conditions equal to those of the male. One of the most striking books on the subject, which has had a profound influence, is "La Rebelle," written by Mme Marcelle Tinayre. It describes the career of a woman journalist who determined to carve out a position for herself, and to be no longer dependent on the other sex. She came to this resolution as the result of bad treatment received at the hands of her lover. Daniel Lesueur's "Nietzschéenne" also deals with the revolt of women from unjust restrictions. "Elizabeth Davenay," by Mlle Claire de Pratz, published in 1909, gives a very good picture of the ideals of advanced womanhood in France.

Only a small section claims the vote. The franchise has not the same charm for the Frenchwoman as it appears to possess for some noisy partisans in England. The Frenchwoman feels that, already, her influence in politics is very great—greater, perhaps, because of being concealed and indirect. Yet most of those concerned in the movement will tell you that their ultimate aim is to remove the sex disqualification for the franchise. The Napoleonic code, they maintain, shows the disdainful attitude of the Emperor towards the other half of humanity; women, children, and idiots are placed on the same level of civic incapacity. It is this disability that will disappear once the sex has accustomed man to equality in other directions. It may be the more logical way of attacking the problem; at least, it is more insidious, and feminism gains new conquests every day.

These things have great social consequence. They tend to the breaking down of those barriers of convention and Bourgeois prejudice which still enclose the French

family. The stranger, be he ever so well recommended by natural gifts, and by birth and education, still finds great difficulty in penetrating to the French "interior." As I have already said, the Frenchman will invite his English or American friend to a dinner at the restaurant, but rarely, if ever, extends that invitation to the home circle, where the stranger would come into contact with his wife and children. As the word is understood in England, the Frenchman is not hospitable. France is the country of no spare bedrooms. Members of different families do not stay with one another as is the pleasant custom in England. The "week-end" habit of interchangeable hospitality has not been engrafted on French stock, though the entertainment of the foreigner has become more common in the country than in Paris. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that each family is the enemy of all others. The family is the explanation of many things in France. The patriarchal idea is always dominant. The view-point of marriage is the family. It is the strongest tie that exists. The attachment of the Frenchman to his mother is proverbial. To the robust Anglo-Saxon mind it appears exaggerated to the point of effeminacy. Yet, in spite of Pierre de Coulevain, who, in "*L'Ile Inconnue*," emits the theory that the English are a masculine and the French a feminine race, we are not prepared to say that the French are effeminate, or that they are decadent. It would be much truer to say that the British are self-complacent.

The French are holding their place particularly in the sciences. Some of the most wonderful inventions of the present day owe their initiation and development to the French. In education they make sound and continual progress, and it would not be inaccurate to say, as I repeat elsewhere, that the general level of instruction is higher

than in England. It may be asked in what direction matriarchy acts adversely on the nation. The answer is not easy to give. I presume that the greatest fault, springing from the adoration of and reliance upon the mother, is a certain want of sturdiness and an extraordinary reluctance to leave the home circle. This, of course, has a deplorable effect on colonial affairs ; at the same time, it has not been bad, perhaps, for the development of the country itself. Emigration, as a solution for social sores, may retard the proper development of the mother country. The drawing-off process for the benefit of the colonies has not been without its hurtful effects on the island kingdom.

There is no country, not even the United States, with its high cost of living, where the common people are as well off as in France. The division of property, the thriftiness of the people, the fact that the woman works as well as the man, and that she brings a certain sum of money, at the moment of her marriage, to the common fund ; also her equipment in household science such as her knowledge of cooking, and her clever general ideas on the subject of clothes and management, contribute in no small measure to make life worth living and to raise the standard of self-respect in the lowest strata of society. It is always difficult to establish comparisons, but I believe the statement that the very poor in France extract much more pleasure from life than the very poor in England can hardly be contested by any one having more than a superficial knowledge of the two peoples.

## CHAPTER V

### SOME FURTHER SOCIAL ASPECTS

THE addiction to sport of the present generation in France is an amazing sign of the times. In particular, French youth has taken up football with an extraordinary enthusiasm, and the day has already arrived when it is able to meet, almost on equal terms, the best talent in England. Apart from the central organization which supplies international players, the Racing Club de France and the Stade Française furnish teams which their English opponents find difficulty in beating. In tennis also, French prowess is admitted, and aptitude is shown in aquatic sports, in boxing, in golf, and a dozen directions. Five years from now, one may certainly expect to see a great development. There are at least two daily papers in Paris devoted to athletic matters, independent of horse-racing, and sports of all kinds have a surprising number of organs in the weekly Press. The renaissance is striking. This new liking for out-of-door exercise, coupled with compulsory military service, is doing a great deal for young France. The race of Frenchmen is growing taller, particularly the wealthier class. Even now, in physique, the inhabitants of the large towns compare favourably with those of London or Manchester. The rural populations are probably stronger in France than in England.

There is a widening-out, generally, in the French character. It is very noticeable in the young men. The exaggerated cult of pleasure, which existed in the Second Empire



and has given us some extraordinary books of memoirs and revelations of social secrets, has passed or is passing in favour of the saner joys of sport and of the more virile occupations of politics. The school of rising stars in the political firmament is the university. Youths of twenty become fired with generous, if impracticable, ideals. In their adolescent imagination every ill to which the world is heir can be conjured by some political nostrum invented by Karl Marx or other of the German philosophers. These enthusiastic young men are a welcome rather than a disquieting sign. They learn wisdom later, when they see the futility of theories that have but little relation to the facts of every day. Of necessity, they find that their dreams must take on a more sober colouring.

It has been urged that this cult of things English by the French will prove inimical to their individuality, causing them to lose their special virtues and substituting others of a foreign sort, for which they are ill adapted by nature and tradition. I do not think this is likely. The French have individuality of their own, and it is likely to be a proof against imitation of an exaggerated section of the community. At the same time, a little mingling of the Anglo-Saxon virtues with the more imaginative temperament will not be a bad thing. And we English are the better for contact with a people who stand for ideas, and who possess the saving grace of intellectual honesty.

In an earlier chapter I treat of the eternal question of the comparative morality of peoples. Are the French more immoral, as the phrase goes, than the English? It may be assumed without, I think, the possibility of contradiction, that the Englishman lives more chastely than the Frenchman during the period of his youth. It has often been remarked with astonishment by French teachers and others having opportunity of observation in England, that the English schoolboy or college graduate scarcely

allows his mind to dwell upon the opposite sex. The older boys in their prefectorial studies rarely discuss the eternal feminine; she is outside their life or but vaguely outlined, somewhere, as a romantic possibility for after years. With the French boy, unless wholly devoted to sport—and consequently “half English” in the view of his compatriots—one of his principal occupations and pleasures is the contemplation of the charms of the girl by whom his fancy has been enthralled. No greater contrast could be provided by the two nations than their manner of regarding women. In a recent play at the *Comédie Française*, one of the characters is made to say, “When we were young and married a wife, we just married her, and there was an end of it. We did not bother any more.” To a certain extent that is the attitude of the average Englishman. Once married, he does not bother any more. The wife is left largely to her own devices. This isolation is necessary during the working day, but it is obviously pure egotism when, after the evening meal, the bread-winner betakes himself to his club. In France the club is only for the select few. There are no cheap institutions of the sort. The average Frenchman does not feel the necessity of a club, of spending hours apart from his wife and feminine society. He prefers conversation with women to any other form of social intercourse. I am aware that there are material reasons that weigh in his decision to forgo a relaxation of this sort, which appears so indispensable to the Briton. The subscription is large, because the Government exacts a heavy poll-tax upon each member. It looks with jealous eye on social organizations, lest, becoming popular and widespread, they should take on a secret and subversive character inimical to the present political system; but that does not affect the general principle.

The Frenchman's regard for women not only influences

his attitude towards clubs, but towards life in general. The Englishman can live independently of feminine influence ; he feels no great necessity for female companionship. A woman is excellent in her place, but she need not necessarily come closely into his own life. The grotesque methods of the Suffragettes, impossible in any other country but England, are largely due to the curious separation of the sexes. Unaccustomed to regard his wife as his intellectual equal, and as an intimate companion in all his joys and sorrows, the Englishman has himself to thank if she, imbued with political ideas of liberality, finds it incumbent upon herself to show her strength to gain his sympathy and respect. By an unfortunate provision of nature, or by a fortunate one, just as one regards it, the Englishman requires to have a new argument sharply driven into his head before he comprehends it. Quickness in the uptake is not a national characteristic. Innate conservatism will not allow us readily to admit a new position. From time immemorial wives have been treated in a certain way in England ; it is preposterous that they should be treated in any other way.

The Suffragette movement, for instance, would be handled in France or in America quite differently from England. If there were really a formidable feminine invasion of the Chamber of Deputies, the most persuasive Parliamentarian of the moment—some elegant Paul Deschanel, or some silver-tongued Aristide Briand, would meet the women and speak them fair. At least they would have the satisfaction of a few pleasant words from the Legislature. They would not have found themselves faced by a hard and fast refusal to listen to their representations. No French Premier would have taken the unimaginative course of Mr. Asquith, who wrapped himself in an impenetrable reserve, and finally turned the police,

horse and foot, at the ladies. The French are quick to see the ridiculous side of a movement which consists in ringing door-bells, breaking windows, and heckling Ministers; at the same time, the women would have been treated with marked deference and courtesy; they would have been listened to and their immediate grievance would have been conjured away by a little suave and considerate spokesmanship. It is one of the fatal drawbacks of the British nature, that it cannot accept a new fact gracefully. The new-comer, the new thing, the new proposition, is always suspect. The resentment of the average Englishman towards the woman who wants to vote is of a piece with his resentment against those who want, say, to pierce a tunnel from Calais to Dover. Quite apart from the question whether women are qualified or disqualified for Parliamentary life, which I do not propose to discuss, there does remain the fact that the demand for votes and the demand for sex equality in all departments of human endeavour have been accepted in a very narrow and sour spirit of resentment. The conservatism of Oxford and Cambridge, in declining to bestow upon women degrees which they have honestly earned, the refusal of the various legal societies to admit members of the sex to the practice of the law, though it is to be assumed that, in certain branches of jurisprudence, they would be admirably qualified, appears unfair and unchivalrous to the Continental mind, particularly in an age of new ideas, when aerial navigation is effacing territorial boundaries, and when insular prejudices and absurd claims of superiority must disappear before the march of science as mist before the sun.

We have wandered far along the line of the sex question. I wished to show that, to the average Gaul, woman is the essential companion of man. It is very difficult, therefore, to place the Frenchman and French-

woman on exactly the same plane as the Englishman and Englishwoman. But, whilst the Frenchman chooses by instinct and preference his close daily companion from the other sex, his attitude towards her is apt to be more carnal, perhaps—less psychic and spiritual—than that of the decent-minded Englishman. It is possible, as we see in America, for women to be worshipped and placed upon a pedestal as the incarnation of an ideal, apart from sex ; but such attitude of mind is not comprehended by the Latins, who are intensely positive when it comes to such matters. Supposed to be endowed with sentimentality, they are, in many ways, less sentimental than the English.

I think it may be assumed that the French are, at once, less promiscuous, less brutal and less egotistical in their relations with their wives and sweethearts, whilst the Englishman conducts his courtship with a greater air of detachment, and thinks, as Marcel Prévost said recently to the writer, in a wonderful phrase, of “the social repercussion of love.” The so-called platonic attitude is possible with an English husband, impossible with a French one. The Frenchman has the faults and qualities of his temperament, and the Englishman the virtues of his. Originally forming a warmer conception of woman, investing her with more colour, and having more temperament, the Frenchman cannot adopt the cold and correct attitude of esteem and respect which is expected, above all, from her husband by the English spouse. To be “respected” in the English sense would, to the Frenchwoman, appear to symbolize a want of love.

The predominance of women in the Frenchman's life, is one of the greatest facts in the social existence. Frenchwomen conduct half the business in France, and are to be found at the receipt of custom in most of the industrial undertakings in Paris and the Provinces. Woman is often



the business head, and possesses prudence, judgment, and economy. The deficiencies, from a business point of view, in the French nature are directly attributable to the influence of the "Missus." Like most honest women, Madame Dupont is mindful of her pence, and thinks that her lord and master does enough spending on his personal pleasures for the whole family. She watches the outgoings with the closest attention; is exact and meticulous in keeping the accounts and extremely chary of any adventure which demands the risking of ready money. The economical spirit is carried to an absurd exaggeration, sometimes. Many a Frenchman would risk the loss of a good piece of business rather than spend the ten centimes necessary to get into postal touch with a purchaser. This is the influence of the woman. At the same time, her admirable caution saves many a business, indifferently conducted by the man, from bankruptcy. So the feminine predominance has its good and its bad aspects.

It has often been remarked that, whilst the young girl is sheltered from contact with the world by a convent education, which extends almost to the moment of her marriage, she, as a married woman, feels herself entitled to see every side of life, and becomes, in that respect certainly, more enfranchised than her English sister. There are great barriers between the married and the unmarried woman. This is aided by laws as well as social customs, of which the laws are but the concrete expression. For instance, a married woman cannot hold property without the consent of her husband, neither can she conduct the least operation, such as buying and selling of shares, without his signature. Until the other day (as I remark in another chapter) woman's interdependence went further; being married, she had not the control of her own earnings. A Bill to establish this piece of elementary

justice was hung up in the Senate for fifteen years. Hence, it is possible for a drunken and dissolute husband to live upon and dissipate the earnings of his wife without giving her cause for legal complaint. By a recent measure, however (as I show above), the woman can, at the moment of her marriage, secure some control of her property by adopting what is known as the system of the "*séparation de biens*." Though in theory the woman is completely subjected to the caprice of her husband, she is in practice likely, to a large extent, to be economically independent. This is due to the fact that she has a "dot" commensurate with her position in life. The much-abused system of the "dot" has its good points in safeguarding the dignity and existence of the woman when married life results in failure. In all these matters affecting the legal status of the wife, the tendency, as I have said before, is to follow the Anglo-Saxon, who devised the Married Women's Property Acts.

It is curious to reflect that whilst woman is, in certain directions, more advanced in France than in England, in certain other directions she still suffers from the disabilities inflicted by Napoleon, who based his conception of the privileges and position of woman in human society on the Roman law, which treated her very much as a vassal. But, happily, the movement is towards her liberation.

It is an age of feminine conquest in France. Women paint and women sculp; they write excellent books; they hold official positions in literary and other corporative societies; they plead in the Law courts, and they treat and nurse the sick. Hospital nursing is the latest occupation that has been made possible for women of culture and refinement. Up to the dispersal of the religious bodies in France, the nursing of hospital patients was exclusively in the hands of the Sisters of Mercy. They were very zealous ladies, admirable in their devotion to the sick and suffering, but their professional equipment was somewhat

meagre. It is a tribute to French surgery and to French medicine that more patients did not die, since they were deprived of that skilled professional attendance which wins half the battle of recovery. Except in special cases of authorization, the Sisters have gone, and, in their place, has come the lay nurse. She began by being a very poor thing, a kind of Sairey Gamp, with no education either professional or general—sometimes with no morals worth speaking about. Her one idea seemed to be to bleed the patient—an expressive term which may stand for her notions of medical treatment as well as her designs upon the victim's pocket. Unless this illiterate and rapacious creature were fed, she could scarcely be relied upon to give the commonest attention. Her cruelty and indifference became a byword and a reproach.

Then some of the young doctors went to London, and they saw how matters were conducted in the great hospitals of the metropolis. They marvelled at the efficiency of the British matron and nurse, real ministering angels in their wards. The visitors returned to Paris converts to the British system. Various attempts have been made during the past few years to replace Sairey Gamp by Florence Nightingale, by women of real heart and head, furnished with a vocation and professional certificates. At the commencement, this commendable movement only received the active support of such as were not Catholics. Protestants and Jewesses wore the white apron and simple print dress of the lay Sister of Mercy. But the movement spreads; it may capture the Faubourg St. Germain one day. Already ladies of aristocratic family belong to the Society of the Red Cross, which nurses soldiers on the battle-field. The middle classes are already won over. This is another reform which, springing from the regrettable warfare between Church and State, has developed into good, and has drawn its best impulse from the understanding with England.

The closing of the nunneries has had another effect than that of causing the authorities to look for lay nurses. It has thrust a number of girls, otherwise provided for, upon the labour market. France is essentially an agricultural nation, and thirty-five per cent of its population are engaged in tilling the ground and reaping the fruits thereof. Among the peasant population a large number of young women devoted themselves to the Church. It was an easy way for the small farmer to provide for his daughters. Once they had adopted the veil, they were off his hands for life. But the Associations Law of Waldeck-Rousseau changed all this by insisting on the registration of the Orders. A large proportion of the Orders refused to bow the knee to civil authority; their establishments were closed as a matter of course. Others who asked for authorization sometimes found it refused on one pretext or another. So that there resulted a large number of persons of all ages thrown suddenly upon the labour market. This circumstance, too, has had its influence upon Feminism, upon the independence of woman, upon the question of her right to seek any employment that may appeal to her or seem suitable to her abilities.

The equal education of the sexes, as in England, is changing the outlook of women. The girl from the Lycée no longer dreams of Prince Charming as the only possible escape from the dreary ennui of existence at home. No; she will make her own way in the world—her own way with the brains and good health that Providence has given her. These things are happening every day. The outward sign of the change is this curious one, that girls of sixteen and seventeen often walk alone to their classes through the crowded streets of Paris—a thing impossible a few years ago, when the governess or the maid was the essential attendant of the young lady.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE RÔLE OF POLITICAL PARTIES

THOUGH there are, in the broadest sense, only two great parties in the State—those who approve and those who disapprove the Republic—the number of subdivisions is legion. One of the misfortunes of the Parliamentary rule in France is the absence of a properly constituted Opposition, such as renders party government, on the whole, a success in England. Whatever its effect abroad, absolute continuity of policy at home means stagnation. A Paris evening paper of the Opposition recently compared the system with a pond, the waters of which become dirtier every time they are stirred up. Only the slightest current is observable on the surface of the pond, a current that is setting towards the shoal marked "Collectivism." The danger to be feared from the absence of an Opposition sufficiently strong to criticize effectively the Administration is political degeneration. The party in power becomes a party of interests instead of principles. The electorate and their servitors, the deputies, become demoralized. There being no vital question to interest them—since with an assured Government majority the battle is won before it is delivered—voters are principally concerned to obtain the highest prices for their suffrages. It is a species of auction, in which the highest bidder carries off the prize. Dishonesty is encouraged on the part of the deputy, who



promises what cannot be fulfilled, and greed on the part of the elector, whose eyes are turned covetously towards the rich neighbour's vineyard. In the Chamber the bad effects of government without a powerful Opposition are seen in a hundred ways. Such scandals as the Wilson Affair, Panama, and "L'Affaire Duez," in which vast sums resulting from the winding up of the property of the dispersed Orders were spirited away, would have been hardly possible had the vigilance of the authorities been stimulated by a strong party out of office. In politics, as in commerce, competition means increased efficiency and a constant effort towards improvement. Instead of a healthy play of parties, there is the play of intrigue. Personal attacks undermine the prestige of Parliament and, at the same time, bring into sharp conflict men of the same political school, whose efforts should have been united to forward some national policy. M. Clemenceau's downfall from power, which came at the end of a brilliant three years of office, was due to an envenomed attack upon M. Delcassé, a politician of, practically, the same group.

The defects of the system seem to me to be accentuated by the stability of Parliament and the comparative instability of Governments. Before M. Waldeck-Rousseau set the fashion of three-year Ministries, the average was about as many months, which gave an immense zest to the sport of Cabinet-making, and promoted speculation amongst the "ministrables." Personal intrigues became a little too pronounced. The fact that the Parliamentary mandate is for four years, without reference to the number of ministries that may exist during that time, has the grave disadvantage of closing the crevices of the Chamber against the entrance of air. Ventilation is not secured by merely disturbing the vitiated atmosphere; a new



d'acclime

Esquisse pour la décoration  
de la Mairie future



de temple

Coin d'Extrême gauche

# INTERPELLATION DAY IN THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES

BY A. ELOY-VINCENT



supply must come in from the outside. By the fixity of the Parliamentary mandate, a sense of permanence is given, which is bad for individual responsibility. The Government's proposal under the Briand Ministry was to renew the Chamber by partial elections every year, in the manner of the Senate, so that two-thirds remain whilst the other third confronts the polls. This would result in a certain letting-in of air, and, at the same time, avoid the agitation of a general appeal to the country.

Elections of late years in France have exhibited a monotonous calm, in contrast with the violent movement of other days. This is due to the causes I mention above and to the feeling of the Opposition that it is useless to kick against the pricks. The principle of the Republic is still challenged by a considerable portion of the population, both Parisian and Provincial, but this resistance finds small expression in the polling booths. There are old-fashioned Republicans, who regret the strenuous days of the *Affaire*, when political passion rose to the pitch of dividing families, cleaving the friendship of years, and causing scenes of excitement in the streets of Paris unparalleled since the Commune. But it is claimed that much good has resulted from this vast upheaval, these terrible wounds that a decade has barely healed. A thunderstorm was necessary to discharge the heavy clouds. Political faiths are reborn in intense political agitation.

"Peace and plenty," however, have their compensations even for the political idealist. France has suffered severely in the past from internecine struggles which have drained her best blood. She has earned a period of rest, if it can be secured without lethargy. Some of the good effects of the truce were seen in M. Briand's attempts to attract the Church to the Republic, but I am bound to say that these efforts finally resulted in his Ministerial

defeat. Yet the day is perhaps within measurable distance when the lion of the Republic shall lie down with the lamb of the Roman Church and there shall be no more allusions to "la Gueuse"—"the ragged rascal"—which is the disrespectful name bestowed upon the present regime by the young men of the Action Française. Yet political differences, notwithstanding the overwhelming verdict of the polls, still run so deep in France and begin so early, that the work of pacification must occupy a generation or two, if it is ever really completed. This divergency of opinion manifests itself in adolescence and is carried right through life, notwithstanding the close contact of the regiment and the promiscuity of professional schools. Dupont and the son of a "particule" can never see alike, though they meet every day in the year on the benches of the lycée, or in the common room of the "caserne." The one will consider the other as hopelessly retrograde—a fossilized specimen of a nearly extinct species—the other will look upon the Republican as a common spoliator, having no grace of loyalty or honour—a "terre à terre" creature with no soul above his material needs. It is the spirit in which Churchmen and Nonconformists regard one another in certain remote parts of England, where no news of the aeroplane has penetrated. As Mr. Gilbert Hammerton says in "French and English," the division between Established and Free Churchmen is a social one; it is largely so in the political world in France. The remnants of the authentic aristocracy and the green shoots of the new and artificial plant advertise their nobility by their contempt of the Republic. Anti-Republicanism is almost a certificate of origin and is as sure a passport to the salons of the Champs Elysées—if not of the Faubourg St. Germain—as an addiction to golf and other gentleman-like sports which are part of the



"chic anglais." It is a social label, though, nowadays, worth much less than, say, ten years ago, when baby plots were hatched in Paris drawing-rooms and Boulanger was the potential Cæsar. A coup d'état, such as Déroulède attempted at Felix Faure's funeral, when he invited the troops to march on the Elysée, for the purpose of installing a dictator, is hardly to be contemplated to-day, though all things are possible in a country which has submitted to such varieties of government, and which possesses the feminine instinct of liking a master. If the Man were to arise, the Hour would be born with him.

Meanwhile, the Opposition, such as it is, is chiefly represented by a Nationalist party, which, though having a perfectly comprehensible "*raison d'être*," fritters its strength in the vainest sort of party tactics. Under the flag of Nationalism marches the most heterogeneous army. There are the Monarchists, pure and simple, though it is possible that they deserve the latter rather than the former adjective. Their hopes are set on the return of the Orleans family to the throne of France. A small, and, it is said, a growing section in France supports the claims of Jean de Bourbon, on the ground that he is the descendant of Naundorff, otherwise the Seventeenth Louis, who is supposed to have escaped from the Temple during the Revolution. Whatever truth there may be in this story, it is fairly well established that the Dauphin did not die in prison, as his jailers recorded. This view is confirmed in a voluminous report drawn up by M. Boissy d'Anglas to the Senate in reply to the petition of the Naundorff family to be recognized as descendants of Louis XVI. The party, however, has no official representative in Parliament. After the Royalists come the Imperialists. The visible Head of the Bonapartists is Prince Victor Napoleon, now married to Princess Louise of Belgium, who

prefers the calm retreat of Brussels to the doubtful experiment of a landing in France. This party, which has its supporters at the polls, is weakened by internal dissension. Some hold that Louis Napoleon, the younger son of Jerome Bonaparte, and a former general in the Russian army, is a fitter figure to typify the Napoleonic legend ; but in either case the discussion is academic.

A group in Parliament, which has its organ in the Press, has adopted the plebiscitary Republic as a base of action. The people are to elect the President for life, presumably from the House of the great Emperor, and, at the same time, they will, consciously or unconsciously, vote for his successors ; they will, in fact, establish by their votes a new dynasty. There is, at first sight, something attractive in the idea of the people electing their own chief of state, instead of submitting to the choice of the National Assembly, formed by the union of the Chamber and Senate. But it is apparent that such a system offers few constitutional guarantees. The life President may transform himself at any moment into Dictator or Emperor, and the example of the Third Napoleon has taught the French the ease of the process. Other groups of Nationalists present other patterns of Republics, but they are alike in being extremely vague. The present system, with its impersonal President, chosen for his colourless qualities and lack of ambition, is open to criticism, but the alternative plans are distinguished neither for cogency nor for affording any prospect of amelioration. Much might be done, as I suggest in my first chapter, by electing a younger President who would play the part assigned to him by the Constitution with greater energy ; but the French have a justifiable horror of the "strong man." Experience has taught them so rude a lesson that they have imposed the greatest restrictions upon the office

of President. He has not the slightest power in internal affairs, and cannot, on his own initiative, remove even a "sous-préfet." Outside his purely representative capacity, he has one shadowy privilege of royalty: the right to sign treaties. But his responsibility is covered here, as in other matters, by his Ministers, who are answerable to Parliament. The abolition of President and Senate was inscribed on the Radical programme as a necessary reform—so little use was either institution considered to be in a growing democracy—and though we have heard little of the project during the last few years, it remains in some form or other. One reason why it has not attained the honours of a practical question is the realization that the Senate has proved really Republican, whilst the office of President has, after all, its uses. It is difficult to see how a headless system would work in times of crisis. Who would summon the chiefs of parties to form a Cabinet, and who, again, would offer official hospitality to the guests of the nation when there was, theoretically speaking, no Government at all? The proposition to guillotine the President may, therefore, be considered premature—like the announcement of a certain humorist's demise.

The Centre gathers to itself the most staid and respectable elements of Republican opinion. Men of the stamp of M. Alexandre Ribot have unblemished political records, and express, in their own persons, the solid Bourgeois sentiment of the country. Socialism they hold in horror: their greatest fault is the Bourgeois fault of lack of courage. The unfortunate phrase of M. Ribot, when, as Premier, he was asked to sanction the revision of the Dreyfus case: "C'est une chose jugée" was the death-knell of his party and of his own success as Parliamentarian. It had as unfortunate a vogue, and very much the same effect, as

M. Emile Ollivier's famous "*cœur léger*." "We enter upon the war," he said—speaking in the Chamber on the eve of the Franco-Prussian campaign—"with a light heart." As historian of the Second Empire, M. Ollivier, should have known the folly of prediction. The Progressist or Opportunist group (as the old name is) has given men like Thiers and Gambetta to the Republic; but to-day it has ceased to take a leading part in the Administration. Its influence is no longer progressive and it is certainly not Opportunist; it is simply steady and stationary. Its counterpart in English politics is the Whigs; like them, the Progressists have had their day, even if they have not ceased to be. The political axis has shifted; the Centre does not count any more, except as a make-weight. Parliamentary life and individuality reside in the Left. The Socialists are the candid friends of the Radicals, who turn and rend them on occasion. Historic are the fights between M. Clemenceau and M. Jean Jaurès, leader of the Parliamentary Socialists. Though the Mayor of Montmartre during the Commune, M. Clemenceau stood forth, thirty years later, as the champion of the middle classes, and, from the height of the tribune, hurled his fiercest invective against M. Jaurès, as the head and front of Socialist offending. M. Clemenceau's oratorical manner reminded one of shrapnel bursting in a plain peopled by the enemy. Every bullet had its billet. Notwithstanding great vigour of expression, M. Jaurès, on the other hand, contrived to combine poetry and imagery in his astonishing verbosity. These rhetorical outbursts constituted the Marathon of the Bourgeois and Socialistic hosts.

The moment had come for a truce, and the Parliamentary flag was borne by M. Briand. As a sign of peace, he took two Socialists into his first Cabinet. He declared that he himself, notwithstanding the responsibilities of office, had

not changed his views. "Je me suis adapté à ma fonction," he exclaimed. "Je viens à vous tel que je suis, tel que vous me connaissez," he said, in his own constituency of St. Chamond, four years after having reached Ministerial rank. Finally, there was the fact that M. Jaurès had alienated sympathy by failing to dissociate himself from the anti-militarist doctrines of M. Gustave Hervé. Hence, it became a comparatively easy task to govern with the aid of these hitherto redoubtable allies, until other events—the strike of the railway men in the autumn of 1910—caused them to be cast out, that the bourgeois strength of the Cabinet might be renewed. In his early contact with Socialism, M. Briand had learned the supreme arts of political dominance.

The most active work has been done by the Radical-Socialists during the past few years. This formidable name was evolved by certain members of the Left, including M. Clemenceau—who was the godfather, though afterwards he disowned his "protégés." It was realized that the day was to the Extremists. An attempt was made to conciliate the two wings of the Left: a sop to the Socialist Cerberus, and a guarantee to the Moderate Republicans. The essential difference between the Socialists and the Radical-Socialists is the adhesion of the latter to the principle of individual ownership—all the difference in the world, in fact. If the tendency is for Parliamentary Socialists to become absorbed by the advanced Republican parties, the general attitude of the Left is affected by its contact with Collectivists and the disciples of Karl Marx.

Whilst there are signs that the country likes its politics plain, the set-back to the Radical-Socialist party in the elections of 1910 only resulted in the loss of twenty seats, which is hardly perceptible as a national movement.



We have, then, the Royalists and the various classes of Conservatives, including the Ralliés, or Catholics, who adopted the Republican idea, with more or less sincerity, on the advice of Pope Leo XIII; the old-fashioned Republicans of the type of 1870; the Radicals and the Radical-Socialists—now hardly to be distinguished since the party has drawn its chief strength from the Radicals—and the Socialists of varying hue, from Revolutionary red until they merge into the comparatively sober tints of advanced constitutionalists.

To the Radicals is due the constructive statesmanship of the past few years. M. Waldeck-Rousseau, one of the ablest of modern statesmen, is the father of that policy which revenged the *Affaire Dreyfus* by laying low the Church. His Associations Law marked a new epoch. The war was carried into the enemies' camp. The Religious Orders were forced to register or leave the country. M. Emile Combes proved a ruthless successor, showing true iconoclastic zeal in driving out the Sisters from districts where they had laboured for years, in the service of the poor, without fee or reward. These proceedings raised very little protest in the country, though fair-minded persons regretted their harshness. It seemed that the majority of the citizens had made up their minds that such measures were necessary in the interests of the Republic. Later, when the Law of Separation, the great work of M. Briand, was voted by the Legislature, the operation of divorce was carried out with the minimum of disturbance. Politicians had judged accurately the moment to effect a change of this sort, and had realized that the old religious feeling, if not dead, was, at least, incapable of inspiring a widespread revolt.

It is true that the taking of the inventories, declared to be a necessary preliminary to the formation of the

Associations Cultuelles (the new style of vestries prescribed by the Act), inspired some animated incidents in Parisian and country churches, the Faithful being under the impression that an act of confiscation was about to be perpetrated: nor is this frame of mind to be wondered at, seeing the revelations of the *Affaire Duez*. But, speaking generally, one can but marvel at the quietude with which was effected one of the most daring reforms yet attempted by the party of democratic progress in France.

The Combes Ministry had the misfortune to attract to itself two Ministers of the type of General André and Camille Pelletan. During General André's stay at the Ministry of War, the spying and informing scandal rose to its full height and led to an exposure and a sensational scene in Parliament, in which the General's face was struck by the Nationalist deputy Gabriel Syveton, of malodorous memory. It was then shown that the religious and political opinions of officers were carefully noted and judgment passed upon them by the local Lodge of Freemasons. It was the reversion of the system under the Second Empire, whereby officers who did not attend Mass found their way barred to promotion. In the Navy, directed by M. Pelletan, similar sectarian influences were at work. Quarter-decks were swept with a vigorous Republican broom and, at the same time, the Arsenal hands had every favour shown them and were allowed to form a trade union. From M. Pelletan's time dates the decadence of the Fleets of France.

His theory was that the days of big battleships were over, and that France should rely on her under-water fleet and torpedo boats. The Admiralissimo was certainly successful in sending more ships to the bottom than any of his predecessors at the Rue Royale, thus confirming his opinion that the future of France lay not upon the water,

but below it. From being the second naval power in the world, France fell to the fifth place, below Japan; but M. Pelletan could still console himself with the thought that his country occupied the same naval plane as Chili and Brazil. One wonders what would have been the reflections of the great Colbert, the organizer of the modern French navy, could he have seen M. Pelletan at work at his own gilded table in the Ministry of the Marine.

M. Thompson strove heroically to clean the Augean stables of M. Pelletan. If the task was beyond him and beyond M. Picard, who succeeded, it is because political tendencies are stronger than individual reformers. M. Pelletan's theories harmonized with those of the party in office, principally because they were cheap; it was reserved for Admiral Boué de Lapeyrere, the Minister of Marine under the first and second Briand Ministries, to effect a re-establishment, in attenuated form, of the Programme Maritime of M. de Lanessan, which stipulated for the building of so many ships a year.

If M. Combes considered that he had come to bring not peace but a sword, his record justified his pretensions. But the active sectarian spirit passed with him; even Freemasonry is no longer heard of as the sinister and occult power behind the Republic. A new era is dawning, represented by conciliation and the representation of minorities.

The politician who emerges with greatest distinctness from the Parliamentary arena is M. Delcassé, who, for many years, conducted the foreign policy of his country from the Quai d'Orsay with the greatest ability and tact. His dismissal from office, at the bidding of Germany, constitutes a humiliating page in modern French history. His attachment to England was conspicuous during his tenure of

office, and, in conjunction with M. Paul Cambon, he worked hard for the Entente Cordiale, realizing that the "contrepoids" of the Triple Alliance was an understanding with England on the one hand and the compact with Russia on the other. Subsequent events have fully confirmed his contention that a new "triplice" would maintain the balance of power, more especially as it has been further strengthened by an Anglo-Russian rapprochement. M. Delcassé's career in the Chamber, since his retirement from the Quai d'Orsay, at the instance of M. Rouvier, has been marked by great public activity. He intervened with dramatic effect in a great debate on Morocco, vindicating his policy against the attacks of M. Jaurès; he proved to be the "tombeur" of M. Clemenceau when the latter, forgetting his dignity as Prime Minister, made an ungenerous onslaught upon the ex-Foreign Minister; and, earlier in the Clemenceau Administration, he had driven M. Thompson from his post of Minister of Marine in the name of national efficiency. When the advent of the Monis Administration brought M. Delcassé again to Ministerial rank, he presided, fittingly, over the great Department of the Rue Royale.

M. Henri Brisson, President of the Chamber, M. Poincaré, M. Sarrien, and M. Léon Bourgeois are types of Radicals who have considerable influence in the corridors of Parliament if their voices are not often heard in debate. M. Bourgeois is one of the most brilliant members of the Radical party, and his speeches at the Conference of the Hague, whither he went as delegate of France, in company with the Baron d'Estournelles de Constant, brought him the respectful attention of Europe. M. Sarrien is a powerful party wire-puller, whose influence is great, both in the Senate, of which body he is a member, and the Chamber.

Of the younger men, M. Paul Deschanel has a great reputation as an orator of distinction, who at one time seemed destined for the highest position in the State. If he has not realized the expectations of his friends, it is because of some suspicion that he flirts with Reaction. Possessing a cachet of elegance, he is sometimes referred to as the Beau Brummel of the Chamber. Paul Doumer is a politician of another stamp. He is of the self-made type, Rooseveltian in his energy. Having been President of the Chamber and Governor of Cochin China, he now aims at the Presidency of the Republic. He is one of the most strenuous and useful members in the Chamber, feared, perhaps, because supposed to be endowed with ambition; but, alas! the elections of 1910 sent him into retirement—a Cincinnatus returned to the plough. M. Etienne is, likewise, a politician of great energy and independence of character. He is the organizer of the present Colonial Office system in France, which owes its inspiration to Mr. Chamberlain, when British Minister of Colonies. M. Etienne is, in fact, a Radical with Imperial notions.

The Right does not contain a vast amount of oratorical ability or of that sort of magnetism which sways an assembly. There are few commanding figures. One of the most esteemed and useful members is the Abbé Lemire, who has associated himself with legislation having a moralizing influence. His principal work has been the introduction of a law to facilitate marriage. The Marquis de Dion is one of the prominent figures of the Church party, and is also well known as a sportsman. M. Maurice Barrès is the type of novelist turned politician. In the Chamber he is what is distinctively called a Nationalist, that is, a Republican of the Opposition, though the term has now come to embrace all those who oppose



the Radical-Socialist Government. He shows himself a very active member of one of the circonscriptions of Paris, interesting himself in commercial and municipal questions. In his books he evokes the old France; it is not surprising, therefore, that his politics should be tinged by the party which has associated itself with "la Revanche" and the Souvenir. It cannot be said that the Right, as at present constituted, has any great chance of utility. By mere weight of circumstances, it is condemned to an ineffectual protest.

In the Senate, one of the picturesque figures is M. Clemenceau, now resting upon his spear after strenuous days as breaker of Cabinets, and then as Prime Minister. His career, like his temperament, has been impulsive and full of passionate moments. Aristocratic by birth and sympathy, he has become democratic by conviction. In him is seen a representative of the old school of Republican, of which another example, outside Parliament, and quite different in his later development, is M. Henri Rochefort, the vitriolic polemist of other days, and still something of a force in a green old age. Baron and Senator d'Estournelles de Constant is probably known to a larger number of Englishmen than any other contemporary Frenchman. This is due to the active part he has taken in the promotion of arbitration and of friendship between the nations. M. Emile Combes is largely responsible for throwing light upon the dark places of the liquidation of the property of the Orders; Senator Béranger is famous for his *Loi Béranger*, or First Offenders Act, whilst General Mercier recalls the "Affaire" and those who accused the Jewish officer. He was Minister of War at the moment of the condemnation of Dreyfus by the first court-martial.

Debates in the Senate are generally conducted in an atmosphere of calm, but, in either Chamber, it is rare to

find the somnolence that occasionally descends upon the British Houses of Parliament. The venerable joke of Punch, the "Hattitude of the House," would have no application at the Palais Bourbon, where there is no opportunity for "forty winks" under the sheltering brim of the top-hat. Only the President wears a top-hat, and that as a sign that, for some extraordinary reason, the sitting is suspended. The tendency is towards an exaggerated display of energy. If incidents arise with too regrettable a frequency for the dignity of the Chamber, the ordinary Frenchman protests that it is of minor importance. What does it matter to him if the Parliamentary machine creaks more or less? The essential is that it shall do what it is required to do. Without staying to discuss whether or not the Chamber fulfils its mission, one may hazard the opinion that the mere solemnity of an assembly may be hurtful to its democratic utility. The old-fashioned procedure of the House of Commons is, probably, an obstacle rather than an aid to business. Is there not something tragically futile in the attention paid to wigs and swords while the Empire is falling to pieces? As to Parliamentary manners, is it better that a man should sleep or indulge in Billingsgate? The latter course has, at any rate, more imagination in it.

Oratory, notwithstanding the occasional explosions of bad temper—and bad language—is on a higher level in the French Chambers than at Westminster. Frenchmen are born orators; moreover, the discourse is generally written, whereas in the House of Commons extemporization is the rule and, indeed, is required by the Standing Orders. For order and arrangement, the speeches to be heard any day from the tribune of the Chamber are infinitely superior to the formless, disjointed, and conversational efforts of British members of Parliament. The mere fact that they speak from their places destroys the effect of a prepared oration

whilst it increases the impression of an impromptu debate. Rhetoric plays the preponderant part in France, whereas the English Parliamentary maxim would seem to be: matter first and manner nowhere. This attention to form is characteristic of French art and literature and intellectual effort generally. Few public speeches in England bear witness to the zealous search for the "mot juste," which distinguishes the most trivial utterances in France, with a resultant loss, sometimes, of spontaneity and originality, and a gain in grace and literary perfection.

Other considerations would be less flattering to French Parliamentary methods. Whilst eloquence is commoner, and an amazing amount of research and mastery of detail go to the making of Committee reports, the general level of Parliamentary achievement is no doubt lower than across the Channel—an achievement, that is, represented by the Statute book. Bills are often badly drawn, with the result that they are stultified in practice. An instance in point is the Weekly Rest Act, which was so imperfect in its provisions that riots resulted. It was afterwards modified so as to remove its inequalities. Legislative incoherence springs from the Chamber's reluctance to take advice, and its reliance upon the Conseil d'Etat to interpret the clauses of new measures. The successful practitioner is generally not available for consultation within the body of legislators, as is the case in England, where a Parliamentary career occupies the mature energies of wealthy men of affairs and property-owners. The ordinary type of French representative is notoriously one who has failed in the exercise of a profession, though this is somewhat less true to-day than formerly.

But the prevailing symptoms of the time point to the failure of Parliament in France. This is not merely due to the stagnation brought about by the absence of a real

Opposition or of any burning party issues, but to the growing conviction of the people that no hope lies in legislation. Real reform is to be effected by economic and extra-Parliamentary means. There is apparently little more to be done by the ordinary type of legislation. Perhaps the future will contain some scheme for giving Labour a larger share of Capital. It is in this field that political doctors must seek their remedies in future. The avarice of the Bourgeois, the tyranny of the middle-class oligarchy, is as likely (other things being equal) to inspire revolution as the old oppression of the aristocrats. Thus, the rôle of political parties is likely to undergo considerable change, even if one does not believe that Parliament will presently transform itself into an assemblage of Trade Unions.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE CHURCH AND CLERICALISM

WHEN Napoleon, a hundred years ago, acting with gentle persuasiveness on the Pope, Pius VII, caused him to put his signature to a Concordat, he realized how necessary the union of Church and State was, how necessary that the Church should obey the State, and yet represent in itself the spirit of organized religion with its ceremonials and sanctity, and its catalogue of restraints. The great Emperor saw that the mass of the people required religion; that it was a powerful factor in governments; that when the Church was overthrown, ideals were overthrown at the same time. Liberty spelt anarchy, and anarchy threatened the life of the Empire. It was from purely material motives that he invited the Church back again to France and sought and obtained the Papal blessing on his own reign. Elsewhere, we relate how, by a rude gesture, he took the crown from the Pope's hands and placed it upon his own head. This was characteristic of the man, of his authoritative disposition. The Concordat stipulated that the archbishops and bishops, curés de canton and simple curés, were to be paid a certain yearly stipend out of State funds. The provision was not a liberal one. Parish priests were passing rich on £40 a year, and the princes of the Church had guaranteed to them the salary of a bank clerk in England. But they



were under the thumb of the State, removable if they misbehaved. Each bishop owed his appointment to a double assent: the assent of the Papal Court and that of the French Government. For long this compact subsisted with more or less success. The Church continued to exist and to do its work in France, and its priests came to regard themselves as "fonctionnaires," more concerned, perhaps, with their official than with their spiritual office. In country districts, especially, they exhibited a slothful disposition, or they became estranged from their flock and attached themselves to the château, whence radiated patronage and a solid hospitality. They became impregnated, no doubt, with retrograde principles.

Under the Second Empire the Church obtained a great hold. It had its say in every Government post. When a functionary was promoted, he owed his preferment, probably, to the fact that his attendance at Mass had been noted, and that he was supposed to be "bien pensant." He had taken care that his wife and children were constant at the church. This spirit not only prevailed in the Civil Service, but also in the Army and Navy. A man who married a good Catholic, and who was thought well of by the bishop, stood an excellent chance of advancement. The famous Père Dulac conducted a school in the Rue des Postes, whence issued the most successful officers in the Army. Such an educational origin was a certificate of character and a passport to Imperial favour. Men of a known Free-thinking and Republican tendency were correspondingly made to feel that their position was not worth much, and that the avenue of progress was closed to them.

This was the state of affairs under the Second Empire, until the war with Prussia came and shattered everything—shattered the golden dream of those who supposed that

the Throne and Altar were for ever established in France. The National Assembly, meeting in Versailles, was clearly Monarchical in sympathy. The majority favoured a return to Monarchy, but, unfortunately, that majority was split up into individually impotent fragments—Legitimists, Orleanists, Bonapartists, and partisans of the Plebiscite. Since they had no cohesion, they could effect nothing. They waited for the Comte de Chambord, but the Pretender never came. He failed at the critical moment, and the Republic was established in his stead. Chambord, it is assumed, was not anxious, personally, for the Throne; he had no children, and he did not wish to play into the hands of the cadet branch of the Bourbons, whom he had never forgiven for the part it played in the Revolution of 1830. By reason of his abstention, the Third Republic arose.

Marshal MacMahon and his immediate successors maintained an attitude of benevolent neutrality towards the Church, but it was apparent to Republican leaders of that time that the Catholics were leaning towards the Throne and were plotting in secret for the Restoration. "Le Cléricalisme, voilà l'ennemi." The famous "mot" of Gambetta rang through the country like a war cry. It did not have the wide significance in its original application that was afterwards given to it—as an excuse for a propaganda against the priests—but it undoubtedly meant that the great Republican tribune saw in the Church, or an extreme wing of it, the symbol of the Reactionary Movement.

Years afterwards, when the Affaire Dreyfus burst upon the country, the prediction of Gambetta came to have a new and sinister meaning. Whilst it seems certain that General Mercier, then Minister of War, originally believed the Jewish officer to be guilty of treason, it is also clear

that the moment the case became a question of politics, blind prejudice obscured the real issues. The Affaire became, not merely a "cause célèbre" in which the guilt or innocence of one man was at stake, but the battleground of the Church or Reactionary parties and Anti-Clericalism as the express image of the Republic. Through the years of this vast agitation the Church was exhibited in an unfavourable light. She was shown as a conspirator working in the dark to undermine the foundations of the Republic. With an angry energy, the Republicans fought tooth and nail for their ideal and swore eternal vengeance against the occult power which threatened their constitutional existence. It was the time of trial: it was the Armageddon, with Progress ranged on the one hand, and Reaction on the other. Whatever one's sympathy for the Church as a restraining and civilizing influence, one must admit that, in this amazing and tumultuous case, the French Catholics exhibited an unholy haste to convict the victim, and, at the same time, to deliver a blow at their political enemy.

When Dreyfus was found guilty for the second time, Christendom execrated the judges with an impertinent intemperance which it is hard to condone to-day. Yet the alleged traitor was never proven guilty, and his retention in prison would have been a crime against humanity and an eternal blot on the escutcheon of France. But, if the Anti-Dreyfusards rejoiced that a second court-martial upheld the decision of the first, they hardly realized that this verdict was the death-warrant of the Established Church in France. Catholicism has never recovered from the crushing effect of the exposé of that time. It lost prestige and, with it, all chance of its own future.

When that astute and able statesman, Waldeck-Rousseau,

took up the reins of office, he perceived the importance of three things. He saw that :

1. France must give greater stability to her Ministries, as the constant change of Cabinet was weakening the executive arm of the nation.

2. That the power of the Church had to be broken effectually to save the Republic from Clerical dominance and to preserve its own life.

3. That it was necessary to conciliate the Socialists by embodying in his own Cabinet a member of the new political party.

It is due to these three considerations that we have these three facts : a Ministry lasting three years, with consequent continuity of policy ; the famous Associations Law, requiring the registration of all Societies and Corporations in France ; and, lastly, the appointment of the Socialist lawyer, Maître Millerand, to the portfolio of Public Works.

In his Associations Law, M. Waldeck-Rousseau was guided by the conviction that the secret societies in the Church were mainly responsible for the anti-Republican propaganda, visible in the long course of the Dreyfus case. Hence, he set resolutely to work, requiring all ecclesiastical, quasi-ecclesiastical, and secular bodies to define their mission in the commonwealth. Contrary to general expectation, this epoch-making law raised very little serious resistance in the country.

It was not given to M. Waldeck-Rousseau to apply the law. This work fell to his successor in the Premiership, M. Emile Combes, who exhibited an uncompromising and sectarian zeal, which has never been equalled in France since the days of the Cordeliers and the other Jacobin societies of the Revolution. He laid ruthless hands upon the Religious Orders, hustling them out of the country when, as happened in most cases, they declined to register,

holding—with some show of warrant—that this was but the prelude to their spoliation. Some who did apply for registration were refused the right; others were unsuccessful for technical reasons. As a consequence, the Orders were dispersed, and their property liquidated. Curious scenes were witnessed at this time—scenes that were strangely out of harmony with the spirit of the twentieth century. Gendarmes escorted Sisters of Mercy out of villages, where they had lived and laboured and grown grey in the service of the community, without fee or reward. Undoubtedly there were many cases of hardship, caused by the implacable character of M. Combes' campaign.

These incidents had almost been forgotten—one grows so easily accustomed to change in France—when a great financial scandal arose, which, to the credit of the Briand Administration, then in office, was boldly handled by the Government. A man named Duez, who had been entrusted with the winding-up of the estates of the Orders, was arrested on a charge of misappropriation. Whilst it seems certain that some of the Orders met the liquidators half-way and gave bribes for exceptional treatment, it is also true that vast sums mysteriously disappeared in their passage through the pockets of intermediary officials. This, unfortunately, is not an isolated case in contemporary history, and one of the greatest difficulties in all democracies is to ensure the honesty of functionaries.

The dissolution of the Orders had been accomplished with comparatively little upset. The next step in the chain of events was the visit of M. Loubet, then President of the Republic, to Rome. For the first time in history, the Chief of the French nation neglected to pay his respects to the Vatican, and confined his visit to the Quirinal. The Pope was mortally offended, and complained of the affront in a Note sent to the Powers—a



Note, by the way, which was not communicated officially to France. This irregularity was followed by a rupture of relations between the Vatican and the Republic. A state of war was declared, and the French Ambassador to the Throne of St. Peter was recalled, whilst, at the same time, the Papal Nuncio was given his papers. Later on, a clever and intriguing priest, who filled informally this office in France, was expelled the country by the order of M. Clemenceau, then at the head of the Government.

The formal rescinding of the Concordat, divorcing Church from State, was now resolved upon. Since all diplomatic relations had been broken off, there was no way of communicating with the Vatican, and the President of the Republic, without consulting that Power, tore up the agreement, signed a hundred years before, and declared that, henceforth, the State would not—except in the case of certain expiring pensions—contribute one farthing to the maintenance of clergy and to the formal exercise of religion in France. This momentous measure was carried through the Chamber of Deputies after long discussion, and really proved to be a piece of admirable statecraft devised by M. Briand, then coming to the front as a great French Minister.

One of the most important provisions in the new Act set up Associations Cultuelles, or Public Worship Associations. These new bodies were to take the place of the old “fabriques,” or vestries, which had hitherto assured the exercise of religion in the different parishes, seen to the upkeep of the church and to the appropriation of parochial revenues. The statesmanlike Leo XIII had been replaced on the Throne of St. Peter by Pius X, a man of peasant origin, with a robust faith in the destinies of the Church, and a temper which brooked no compromise with those whom he considered to be her enemies. Not having been

consulted in the Separation of Church and State by the French Parliament, His Holiness refused to accept the conditions whereby the Church could continue to exist as an officially recognized body in France. He declined, absolutely, the alluring Public Worship Associations and the bishops, who are said to have been favourable to the idea—not knowing then the attitude of the Holy See—were firmly recalled to a sense of their dependence upon the Holy Father's wisdom and discretionary power.

Before the intransigence of the Pope, the Government of the Republic practically waived the question of the Associations, leaving to the local authorities the care of seeing that the churches were, first of all, offered to the Catholics and at the same time, allowing them to apply local funds for their repair. If no regular Catholic body desired to use the church for religious offices, then it was in the power of the Commune to make what other disposition it liked.

The result of this latitude is already seen. One church in the Department of Seine-et-Oise has been destroyed by dynamite because it was considered unsafe—the Commune would not spend one halfpenny on its restoration ; another edifice in the South of France has been closed because of a similar reluctance on the part of the authorities to vote public moneys for its repair. I am writing in the early part of 1911, and, no doubt, before this book has gone into other editions, there will be many instances to add to those I quote.

Is religion, then, utterly dead in France? Is there no sign of the Church adapting itself to new conditions? It would be unfair to put the case as uncompromisingly as that ; at the same time, it must be admitted that the religious future is black and there are few signs of that silver lining which is said to be behind every cloud.

Undoubtedly, the effect of Separation has been to stimulate the zeal of good Catholics by eliminating those whose Catholicism was merely perfunctory and social in its character. It is still true that a large majority of people baptize their children in church and add the religious marriage ceremony to the purely civil one required by the law. Socialist deputies are often reproached because their wives and children attend church ; and we have had this strange spectacle of a violent protest on the part of atheistical parents in a Southern town of France against the resolution of the priest to exclude their children from confirmation. Even more ironical is the objection by Radical-Socialists to the ruling of the parish priest that the bell shall not be tolled for "libres penseurs." Mayors of Communes have given orders for the removal of the restriction. Baptism, the first communion, and church marriages are still regarded as signs of respectability, which the most ardent Anti-Clerical is not willing to forgo.

This is one aspect of the case. Another is embodied in the fact that the really zealous Catholic works harder than ever for the good of the Church, and the effect of Separation from State patronage has been to increase the offerings of the Faithful and to galvanize the clergy into fresh efforts for their flock. Again, the dissolution of the Congregations has been regarded by numbers of country clergy as a blessing in disguise, for the reason that many of the friars of the preaching Orders attracted wealthy and pious benefactors to chapels in the monasteries, to the detriment of the work and influence of the regular clergy. These Orders, in fact, constituted a competition of a particularly onerous character ; at the same time, they often showed themselves independent of ordinary hierarchical discipline, since their Generals were in Rome, whence they took their Orders, and they were thus, in practice, outside

the jurisdiction of the bishop in whose See they were working.

The position of the town clergy has not changed for the worse under Disestablishment, except in the poorest parishes. Amongst the richer congregations the stipend suppressed by the Government has been more than compensated for by private liberality, and the number of attendances at Mass at the great Church festivals, as well as the amount of the offertories, has been considerably increased. Men, also, have bulked largely in the congregation in many of the churches, and, to a superficial eye, there has been a distinct renaissance of faith in urban parishes. Yet, one must not forget two qualifying facts : one is that this revival is confined to the towns, and is seen very little in the country ; the second is that, whilst not disparaging the Christian zeal of many worshippers, it is indisputable that politics is not unconnected with church-going—a state of things that cannot last indefinitely.

As I mentioned in a previous chapter, the strongest adherents of the Church are to be found amongst those political parties most unfavourable to the present régime. I am aware that this is not exclusively so, for, in certain parts of Savoy, where the electorate returns Radicals to the Chamber, the attendance at church of both sexes is considerable. Also, it is notorious that, whilst measures of the most Radical sort may pass the Chambers, their application is a different affair. It is known that more than one deputy gave his vote to the harshest measures devised by M. Combes, but hurried afterwards to the Ministry of the Interior to create an exception in favour of the Sisterhood established in his own particular circumscription.

I have said that, in country parts more especially, the Church shows a tendency to disappear. Even those who

take an optimistic view fear that, in a year or two, the most zealous and the most liberal will cease their contributions in face of the hopeless and gigantic character of the task. The prelates have exhibited extraordinary adhesion and faithfulness in obeying to the letter the instructions of the Holy See; at the same time, neither they nor the country clergy—just as whole-hearted in their efforts—can save the situation, if the mass of the people remains indifferent to their ministrations. The restriction of revenues has had the effect of introducing economies into the internal working of the Church. A single priest, mounted upon a bicycle, now covers several parishes, which formerly maintained three or four curés; in the same way, there has been a grouping of districts, so as to enable the rich parishes to come to the aid of the poorer. The more fortunate communities are directly taxed by their spiritual pastors for the maintenance of religion in less favoured areas.

It may be asked if the Church could have accomplished more by bending to the wind of expediency and becoming Opportunist like its political opponents. Is its Divine inspiration gone, or is its loss of influence due to secular causes?—want of perception, lack of common prudence and worldly wisdom? These are difficult matters to settle off-hand—matters particularly difficult for the layman not in close touch with the ecclesiastical world. Nevertheless, the assertion may be hazarded that the Pope made a lamentable mistake in first decreeing his own Infallibility in 1870. This has been one of the bitter pills for intelligent Catholicism to swallow. That the Pope can do no wrong is surely as hard a doctrine for the lay mind to accept as that the sovereign of a free people rules by Divine right. Such creeds belong to bygone ages, when the world was dark and held strange delusions.



Then, again, the miraculous grotto at Lourdes has proved a stumbling-block for the twentieth-century Catholic. Many of the cures obtained from bathing in the waters of the spring of Bernadette are, probably, quite authentic. Personally, on my visit to Lourdes, I was struck with the sincerity of the members of the Medical Bureau, as well as with the proselytizing zeal of the clergy; nor did the particularly commercial aspects of the town obtrude themselves, such as the readers of Zola's "Lourdes" might suppose; yet it is, perhaps, not necessary to look to supernatural means for an explanation of the sudden ability of cripples to walk, of the blind to see, and of the palsied to rise from their beds of sickness. Mere nervous excitement, acting in special circumstances, will produce extraordinary changes—at least, momentarily, in the condition of the chronic invalid. Faith cures are no myths, but belong to recognized medical phenomena.

Leo XIII had much of the guile of the diplomat and saw the trend of events. He saw that the Republic was to become dominant and that the Clerical party, politically considered, was dead. Hence he trimmed the sails of the ecclesiastical barque to catch the wind. He issued instructions to the Faithful in France to rally to the Republic, to waste no longer their energy in useless fighting. This party was known for years as the Conservative "Ralliés." It may be that their conversion was not sincere, and that, whilst adopting the label of "ralliés," they remained recalcitrant; but, at least, they gave men to understand that they had given up the old fetish of a Throne and adopted the idea of a Republic. That was the policy of Leo XIII, and, for years, it succeeded. It is doubtful if the suppression of the Concordat could have come in his time. He had too much worldly wisdom to attempt to fight against the inevitable. His practical

sense would not permit him to engage in a battle that was bound to end in one way. But his successor in the Pontiff's chair is a man of other mettle. He has in him the stuff of Christian martyrs, a Crusader of the old time. He has made up his mind that the present rulers of the Republic and the Church cannot be on good terms, for the reason that, in denouncing the compact made with Napoleon, they are disregarding the claims underlying the contract: that the State pensions to the clergy were compensation for the confiscation of the Revolution. Being pledged to a certain course, Pope Pius X admits of no concession, no flinching from the material consequences. This is the difference between the two men: the one supple, accommodating—a real tactician; the other intransigent, rigid in his adherence to certain standards of right and wrong.

Had the Church been more pliable, it would, perhaps, have kept its place in France. Had it shown better judgment in abstaining from political propaganda, it would, certainly, not have raised up the enemies that it has at present. Much of the persecution that fell upon the Church in the closing years of the nineteenth century was due to its own perverted action, half-a-century before, in the days of its triumph, under the Second Empire. It showed itself intolerant and prejudiced, and, when its turn came, the Republic exhibited an equal want of consideration.

Voltaire said that if no God had existed, one would have had to be invented. The French, at this moment, are suffering from having dethroned God and from having thrown down His altars. Yet, in the present state of affairs, one cannot help blaming the Church for having failed to realize the significance of events. It should have comprehended that the public waited for an expression of opinion,

a solution of modern problems. But none came. The voice of the Church was dumb. The oracle spoke not when questioned upon such matters as Church doctrine in reference to modern investigation and scientific thought. Abbé Loisy arose and, in trenchant fashion, applied to the New Testament that searching analysis which had hitherto been only given to the Old. He examined, ruthlessly, such questions as the Virgin birth and the Resurrection of Christ. And the Church, which had objected to "La vie de Jésus" of Renan, objected even more strongly to the work of his successor in the Chair of Religions at the Collège de France. It saw in the sweet reasonableness and the moderation of his tone—careful, balanced, coldly logical—the most deadly weapon that could be turned against it. And so his books were placed upon the Prohibited Index and he was banned from the kingdom of the Faithful. Thus, there was profound Catholic indignation when the Government gave the excommunicated priest the professorial chair in the Collège de France in virtue of his remarkable works in higher criticism.

Whilst the Church has certainly to guard its fundamental doctrines and to see that there is no whittling away of what are sometimes called the "Eternal Verities," it might well be that, in so large a fold as the Roman Communion, room might be found for this intensely scholarly spirit, this savant steeped in a knowledge of Eastern religions and possessed of the most honest and sincere historical sense. His worst offence is that he has taken the Scriptures and treated them as the historian might. If it were urged that his conclusions would undermine the religious faith of the weaker brethren, refutation might be found in the fact that his books have all the characteristics of technical and highly scientific works, and make no appeal to the popular mind. Nor is it to be imagined

that those who constitute the bulk of the Catholic Church ever indulge in extraneous reading, bearing upon the inspiration of the Gospels or such matters; nevertheless, it is true that his teachings are likely to influence those preparing for the priesthood.

Only the younger clergy in France show curiosity as to modern thought. Men above forty are, as a rule, immersed in their parochial affairs, and exhibit none of those disquieting tendencies towards investigation which would bring them within reach of the anathemas of the Church. They hold a comfortable faith, and have long since quelled any promptings of the inquiring conscience that they might have had in earlier and more ardent days. To them their faith has crystallized into symbolism, and their teaching into the set doctrines of the Christian Fathers. But men of younger years are undoubtedly perplexed and torn asunder by the modern spirit of doubt. The circumstance that the numbers of the priesthood are diminishing in France is not due merely to material considerations—the question of loaves and fishes—but is affected by the general disbelief which has spread itself over the land and attacked the doctrinal side of religion as well as all matters of authority. “Intellectual anarchy,” the “Temps” calls this attitude of mind. Whatever the form it takes, whether in the restlessness of the working classes, whose outbursts now and again alarm the Bourgeoisie and shake their complacency; in terrible examples of precocious crime, or in anti-militarist propaganda and assaults upon private property, it seems to be possessed by the devil of destruction. It breaks down idols and puts nothing in their place.

The Church, then, in France, has difficult times in store, having missed the golden opportunity for real usefulness. Sometimes its voice is heard to good purpose, as in 1910,

when the protest of the bishops against un-Christian teaching in the schools found expression in Parliament and recognition from the Government, which acknowledged the right of parents to control the teaching of their children. But, for the most part, the Church has lost real hold, and, perhaps, can never regain it. Like Parliamentarism, it seems to have had its day, to have become clogged and sterile.

As to the function of the Church in the future, we are guided by the fact that it has intervened in the interests of Labour. Mgr. Amette, the Archbishop of Paris, has shown zeal in the cause of social reform. He took up the question of the bakeries in Paris, insisting that night work should cease. This attitude so delighted the working bakers, then on the verge of a strike, that they invited the prelate to one of their trade union meetings. The offer was not accepted; but it is a sign of the times that the Church should put itself so directly and forcibly in line with militant "syndicalism." Another prominent Churchman, the Comte de Mun, a member of the Parliamentary Right, has exhibited great sympathy with the working girls of Paris, and taken a lively part in vindicating their claim to a living wage, thus enabling them to preserve their self-respect. The only serious newspaper organ representing shop assistants is supported by a Catholic organization.

It would appear that if the Church wishes to maintain any hold in France, it must come out resolutely from the ranks of the demi-semi-quaverers, from those who tolerate the Republic merely because they are afraid to be hostile. It is the business of Churchmen to show that Catholicism and Republicanism are not incompatible terms. The example of the United States is a proof that the two can exist under the same roof-tree. But, in the "land of the



brave and the free," Catholicism is a vastly different thing from that in the old countries. It is no longer Ultramontane, but has adopted the most Liberal aspect. It has abandoned idolatry, but conserved the inward spirit of Catholicism. It is in concession to this principle that the Vatican has been urged to give more red caps to the United States; but it somewhat fears this new and innovating doctrine from across the Atlantic.

The Church must proceed along these lines and refrain from all political action. Church people themselves say that their revenue is now better than ever before, and that those who have departed from the fold were only nominally of the Faithful. Yet it is undoubtedly true that problems of a difficult kind have to be faced and conquered. Will the Church rise to the height of its task? This depends largely upon the wisdom or unwisdom of those who are, at present, conducting its destinies. If it came out into the open and bravely faced all the problems that are to be faced in modern France, shaking off sloth, boldly ranging itself with the lovers of good order, of justice, mercy, and purity of government, it would have the tacit support of all classes. But, at present, it shows a disposition to lurk in the shadows of political intrigue, not without—I hasten to say—certain excellent reasons. But, obviously, it must rise above party prejudice and exhibit the superiority of the Christian martyr to persecution. It is to be feared that the "beaux jours" are passed for ever, but, at least, it can awaken the admiration of the people, and its influence is necessary in order to safeguard the country from a too materialistic tendency.

One of the most important missions of the Church is the care and education of the young. As I have pointed out, elsewhere, many of the Church schools have been abandoned by reason of the growing expense and difficulty of

maintenance. In their place are springing up "patronages" or organizations for Church lads, which, from the Churchman's point of view, have this advantage, that they are outside Government inspection, and there is no examination of the theories inculcated in the young. It is just possible that the "patronages" may be more sectarian in their influence than even the schools, but the teaching is less continuous, since the children can only attend on free evenings.

One of the unfortunate effects of divisions in France is that they affect the young. Boys attending Church schools and clerical lycées have their views coloured all through life, and they are from their nursery days already embarked in the Opposition. This is obviously bad for the country since a common educational origin for all her citizens—provided you can secure really "neutral" teaching—is one of the necessities of a progressive and democratic rule.

Women have always supported the Church in France, and one of the reasons why the Radical and Socialist parties are unwilling to give the sex the vote is the feeling that, in the exercise of it, it will bring back the dreaded institution. Whether this view is justified or not, there seems to be some likelihood—without waiting for female suffrage—of a return of some of the Orders, when the policy of conciliation becomes more marked.

In any case, the Church exists, piloted by men of strong vocation and robust faith, who have shown remarkable devotion to the Holy See in the midst of a depressing crisis. Even now one might find the Church coming to its own again in France if only it would recognize the changed conditions, make them its own, and draw from them the best results that can be obtained.

## CHAPTER VIII

### PARIS AND PROVINCIAL SOCIETY

REPUBLICANISM superimposed on a large surface of Monarchical history has created piquant differences in society. Notwithstanding the forty years of existence of the present Republic, there is still the gulf between the Faubourg St. Germain, the sacred grove of the old nobility, and the Republican drawing-rooms promiscuously scattered on the Right and Left Banks. The abiding-place of the old aristocracy, or such remnants of it as are more or less authentic, is still proof—rigidly proof—against Republican invasion. No Republican Minister and his wife fraternize with “le Monde” as it is understood in the social columns of the “Gaulois.” And it is rare that the young descendants of ancient lineage leave the cold and formal atmosphere of the Faubourg for the wider world of affairs either of politics, finance, diplomacy or the “haute magistrature.” If, as sometimes happens, the scion of a noble house is impoverished, he may wed the fortune of Bourgeois brains and industry, particularly if of foreign or Semitic origin. In that case he raises the lady, Semitic or American, to his own dignity, and her identity is lost in her husband’s dull world. Nor does either one or the other dream of enlarging the circle of his or her acquaintance by conversing with the stranger elements of either society.

The Faubourg remains closed to the New Idea, as

it is closed to the parvenu, except, as I have said, the dowered stranger from beyond the seas. As a rule, the only avenue for employment under the Republic is the Army, certain of the smart cavalry regiments being officered by men of the old families. Even here, they may find their opinions in conflict with their duty to the State, as occurred during the expulsion of the Orders. In some few cases the position of a Catholic officer was so intolerable that resignation naturally imposed. There are, conceivably, other occasions when the requisition of the military arm by the Prefect of the Department might raise a protest in the breast of a Royalist or "croyant," just as a Socialist officer has sometimes objected to strike-duty as a demonstration in favour of capital. But these instances, of either one sort or the other, are comparatively rare.

Of late years there has been some attempt, on behalf of the Faubourg, to enter the diplomatic service, but French representatives abroad are more and more drawn from good Bourgeois stock—the Republican aristocracy, it is called; and men like the Cambons, Pichon and Delcassé represent the high level of the middle classes. General André's strange rule in the Army, introducing (as is alleged) the informative "fiches" and other distressing symptoms of Jacobin espionage, disgusted some officers of the old régime; whilst (as I show in Chapter VI) his colleague in the Navy, Camille Pelletan, appeared to delight in encouraging the lower ranks of the service at the expense of their superiors: admirals suspected of reactionary sympathies.

Republican society and Republican influence are dominant to-day, though there have been occasions when the greatest tact was necessary, in the interests of State, to prevent a breach between the ladies of the Republican

circles and the aristocratic dames of a foreign Court. Difficulties of this sort arose during the visit of the Tsar and Tsarina to Compiègne, in honour of the Grand Alliance, and required diplomacy to smooth over. But, though there is a great gulf fixed between the "monde" and the Republican bourgeoisie, the actual influence of the former in politics or in the arts and literature daily dwindles. Now that the old power of the Church is broken, as a political factor, this influence is much less potent than before. The curé, of course, exercises a certain social influence in Paris and in the large towns of France, and dignitaries of the Church make appearances in elegant drawing-rooms; but their rôle in life is not what it was, nor are they as much considered, perhaps, because of the prevalence of Free Thought. Republican deputies object to the curé, not so much because of his principles as because of his practice: the practice of the confession, which induces the indiscreet wife to reveal to the priest, to be carried later to Rome, secrets in the plan of Republican action. The feeling that the wife of his bosom was giving information to the opposite camp has had a large effect in shutting Republican doors to the ministers of the Roman Church.

The salon is almost dead. The few that remain are shorn of their former splendours. The last real salon that existed was that of the Princess Mathilde, niece of the great Napoleon and cousin of the Third of that name. It was thought by some that she was going to marry Napoleon III, and such was her charm and gift for hospitality that she would have made an excellent hostess of the Tuileries and would probably have prevented the catastrophe, which was hastened, according to contemporary observers, by the tactlessness and air of frivolity exhibited by the Empress Eugénie. It was the Princess



Mathilde, indeed, who introduced the Countess de Montijo to her Imperial cousin. Mathilde reigned fifty years as the greatest social queen of Paris. During the Empire, her salon was a close rival of the Imperial Household, and, after its disappearance, she continued to hold her receptions under the ægis of the Republic, succeeding, by a perfect discretion, in allaying any suspicions as to her attitude towards the new Government. Her salon, indeed, was not political in tone, but artistic and literary. There came to her gatherings the most celebrated men in France, and, during the long period of her reign, she impressed her contemporaries with her grace of manner and her gift of hospitality.

Since her time, these daily assemblages of brilliant people in the house and park of St. Gratien have had no equal. Mme Juliette Adam still holds court in her charming retreat of the Abbaye de Gif, but her receptions are of rarer occurrence. Here and there, in the city, well-known literary ladies gather together their friends at stated intervals, but the salon, as it used to be, hardly survives. The nearest approach to it is the Foyer of the Comédie Française, where the subscribers meet on certain nights in the week, just as in the Inner Foyer of the Opera, the older habitués gather, recounting reminiscences and exchanging the gossip of the day, on each Monday during the season. There are other semi-public places in Paris where one talks; but the old gay spirit that gave birth to salons has departed, hurried out of existence by the automobile, the hustle and sporting proclivities of the age. Men whose interest in life is centred in the golf-ball, in dry flies, or in travelling at break-neck speed across the country are not likely to care for witty and amusing conversation.

The charm of the French salon lay in its general

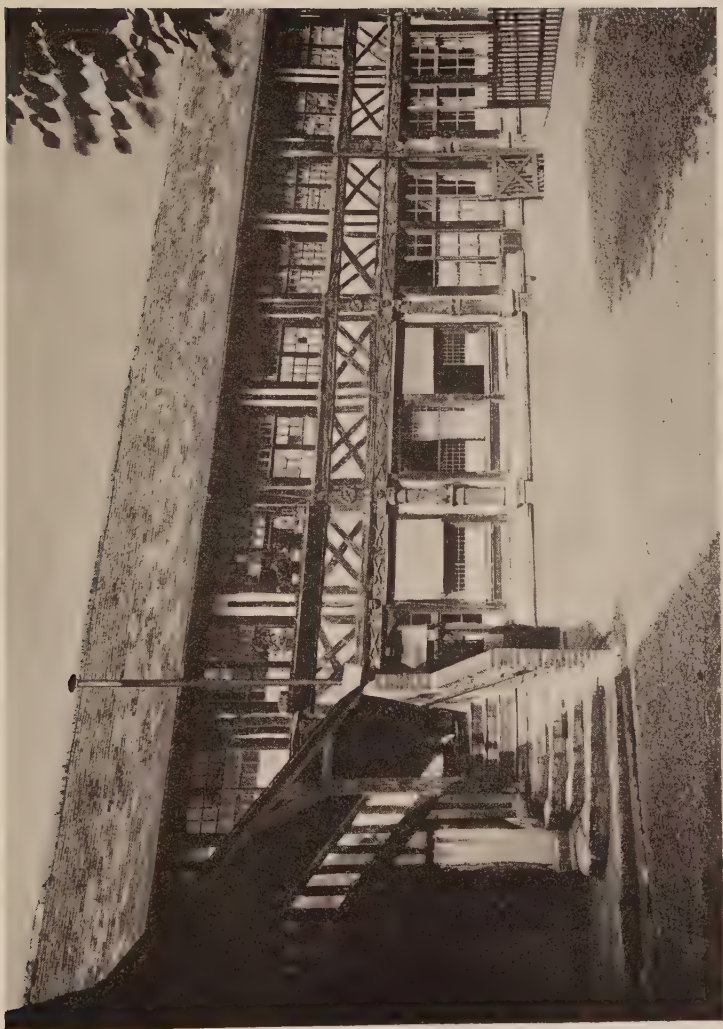
exchange of ideas. The tête-à-tête was taboo: none talked his personal secrets with his neighbour in a sepulchral voice, or bandied banalities about the weather and the crops. Such topics are disallowed at French tables and in drawing-rooms; in their place is a bright and generous flow of wit and badinage, a verbal tennis over the board, with every competent player taking part and keeping up the ball as long as his conversational skill permits. Thus, in the salon was a general commerce, an exchange and mart of ideas, a quickening of the intellect, a sharpening of the wits, such as no British "five o'clock," with its dull generalities and gossiping groups, could produce.

But French society tends to become infected with the active spirit of the English and Americans. The fashionable Frenchman of to-day approaches the Anglo-Saxon in his spending capacities and addiction to sport, rather than his own forbears. He spends more, travels more, and thinks less—at least he reads less. Then, too, "le monde," notwithstanding all that has been written on the subject, are much freer in their ways than the Bourgeoisie. Their daughters are not hedged about as are the demoiselles of the middle class—always timid of social innovation—and they ride freely in the park of a morning attended by the groom, or go in their automobile to La Boulie, where they meet their girl friends for a game of Badminton or of golf, on the ladies' course. Yet it may be said, with no invidious intention, that these young ladies of the highest French society take no chances which would compromise their position, and the gesture of a young girl inviting the glance of a stranger male is quite unheard of. Nor do they flirt with chance acquaintances. Coquetting with love is not a French amusement. The whole subject is regarded as too serious. It is only quite recently that the stage has pictured humorously the love-sick youth. "A

quoi bon?" asks the ordinary young man or woman when invited (in defiance of Alfred de Musset's comedy: "On ne badine pas avec l'Amour") to play the game of love-lorn language and languorous glances. "What is the good? unless I intend to go the whole way."

The introduction of the commercial element has changed society to a large extent in France. The "parvenu" is everywhere, planting himself firmly in the Champs Elysées and even looking, with a little pitying patronage, upon exclusive drawing-rooms of the Faubourg. By hook or by crook he will enter and carry away something that can be purchased for his pains: a dowerless daughter with a title, some crested privilege, some apanage of the old estate. The obtrusion of money is one of the most marked features of the social transformation. It is partly responsible for the semi-abandonment of the old aristocratic pursuits which brought together the upper classes for their stag-hunting in the forest of Fontainebleau and the surrounding woods of the Paris region. Another reason, also, why the "monde" is timorous of the approach of wealth is the latter's precipitation to adopt or purchase titles, which, in the popular view, rank it with the authentic nobility. If one considers the fact that the younger sons of the French aristocracy bear the titles of their fathers, and that at least half the blasons borne by purse-proud people are entirely unauthorized and simply self-appropriated, one gets a fair impression of the confused state of French society at this moment. No doubt the concierge is impressed by the title of count or vicomte, but the ordinary world wears a weary smile when it is asked, by inference, to do homage to some self-styled noble.

Provincial society differs considerably from the social complexion of Paris. In industrial towns, such as Lille



OLD HOUSES, ROUEN





and Bordeaux, Rouen, Lyons, Marseilles, you have business interests predominating. Judges and magistrates and Republican functionaries take a high place; the general commanding the district is a social personage, the Prefect is looked up to, and every functionary is considered with a respect that is strictly in proportion to his "pull" with the powers that be. The smaller the place the more local influences prevail, of course, and the greater the play of the particular caucus which gives the deputy his majority. The main occupation of the smaller towns is politics and the intrigues which are dignified by the name. The governor of the local asylum, the keeper of the prison, the postmaster, the "chef de gare," the commissaire of police, even the school teacher, and the "garde champêtre," feel more or less the power of the representative of the people who sits in the Palais-Bourbon. One of the most curious facts of village life is the dominance of Dominie. He is often the agent of the deputy. In England he concerns himself exclusively with education; in France he is a species of tyrant speaking in the name of Freemasonry and other influences. Collectively, he is a Collectivist, which may account for certain tendencies in the rising generation, and, also, for the mistrust and dislike with which he is regarded in "bien pensant" circles. The exaggerated development of the "esprit de clocher," or parochial spirit of the country-side, is largely responsible for the present movement to modify the return of members of Parliament by adoption of the "scrutin de liste." It is thought that with a widened electoral area will come wider interests and a larger conception of the rôle of Parliamentarian. Whether this is so or not, the fact remains that the intrigues of party—the swing of the pendulum between the Republican who is an unavowed Monarchist and the Republican who

is an avowed Socialist or perhaps a Revolutionary—provide the chief occupation in small centres of population in France.

The life in a Sous-Préfecture presents the deadliest sort of monotony to persons of active temperament, and, as a consequence, the ambition of Madame la Sous-Préfète is always to migrate to Paris, where she will be in the centre of movement and where her husband will have a greater chance of exhibiting his unrivalled talents as "arriviste." In the garrison towns, of course, the military element imposes itself, and, contrasting with this society of officers and their wives, is the rival camp of the Freemasons, which represents the acme of Anti-Clericalism and Free Thought, with a disdain, more or less pronounced, for the Army and all its works. Since the Parliamentary exposure of General André's system of "fiches," the power of Freemasonry as an occult political influence has declined in France; nevertheless, as I have mentioned earlier, Governments of late years are said to obtain a great deal of information concerning the fidelity of their functionaries by the obscure means of the Lodges. Freemasonry, in France, it is hardly necessary to remark, is vastly different from the movement in England, where it is under the direct patronage of Royalty. English Freemasons are forbidden to enter French Lodges, since the Continental Brother is, admittedly, little inclined to credit Monarchy or the Church with good motives.

The deadly dullness of French provincial life contrasts sharply with the existence of the country squire in England. There is none of those reunions, social, agricultural, and sporting, which unite all classes in England. You do not find the curé meeting his parishioners on the cricket field; and this not merely because cricket is not a national game. If it were, you could

hardly imagine the association of the Clerical sheep with the Republican goats. Nor do Radical-Socialists and the country gentry fraternize on the golf-ground, at agricultural shows, at local trotting matches, and the hundred and one institutions that make country life in England so interesting and varied to men of out-of-door tastes. Social life is an affair of groups, pivoting about a café, the head-quarters of a caucus. Men of diverse political sentiment may meet and shake hands coldly, but they will not fraternize socially as is the way in the milder, more mellow atmosphere of England. In France, political hostilities accompany a man to his death-bed and sometimes beyond it. The Church will refuse Christian burial to a Socialist who has distinguished himself by a violent Anti-Clericalism. The odd thing, I repeat, is that the friends of the defunct militant should show such displeasure at the priest's embargo. It is a proof, perhaps, that they are very human after all.

Country life lacks the stimulus of fox-hunting and those other pleasures that draw all classes together. You do not find any mingling of the local landowner and his tenants in the ride to hounds: the friendly sporting instinct that unites the squire and the working farmer in the Shires. "Petite culture"—the intensive cultivation of the fields and their subdivision into minute holdings—tends to bar all hunting operations, and a fox who should be bold enough to visit a peasant's hen-roost would be speedily shot, in defiance of the rules of sport. A bagged fox, however, supplies some runs in the Pau district, but truth compels me to state that Reynard is an English importation. Such hunting as there is, in the great forest lands, is a question of money down—paid by some rich magnate or a rich society, which hunts the stag so many times a week, and in return for the privilege, pays a

large annual rent to the local commune in relief of the rates.

Large estates are comparatively few, for the reason that they were broken up at the Revolution and given to the peasantry. The latter till their land with an almost ferocious industry. Their desires are centred in the land, and in its acquisition. The peasant cultivator dreams of adding fresh fields to his present holding, and judges the Government by its ability to save him from taxation and, in consequence, increase his means of livelihood. A great part of the peasant's anxiety to secure the passing of the Income Tax by Parliament arises from his conviction that he himself will not have to pay it, but that the burden will be borne by the rich who live in the towns, and, perhaps, by the foreigner—a fit victim for any project of the sort. His politics, therefore, are literally "*terre-à-terre*," though he likes to have his ears tickled with high-sounding phrases and with appeals to patriotism.

The real wholesome sentiment of France comes, nevertheless, from the population which owns and works the land. This is the silent but dominating element in French politics. The country restores the balance, which tends to become upset by the towns. In the large centres of industry the tendency is either violently reactionary or violently Socialist; it is in the country, amidst the quiet, hard-headed, intensely industrious agriculturists, that you find real common sense, and the thrift that is the essential virtue of the people. Contact with the land brings sobriety and calmness of judgment. It is also true that it robs a man of that acuteness which is part of his equipment in the towns. Thus the French peasant is the predestined victim of the speculative Paris banker, who bombards him with prospectuses in the hope of attracting his investments to his bogus or doubtful concerns. The



THE MEET: A FRENCH STAG-HUNTING SCENE IN THE FOREST OF COMPIEGNE.  
PACK HUNTED BY THE MARQUIS DE L'AIGLE





"véreux" banker exists at every street corner in the metropolis—a speculative outside broker ready for any game. In his service is a daily bulletin, sent broadcast through the post, and praising the stocks he handles. Many hard experiences with the company promoter and the commission agent have made the peasant wary. Yet, like many suspicious but illiterate people, he has his vulnerable parts, which are more open to the unscrupulous than the scrupulous. He shuts his ears, sometimes, to the legitimate scheme because he has listened to the enchantments of the wild-cat promoter. But, in a general way, he clings to the gilt-edge securities of Municipal loans and Government stock, which represent the least risk and guarantee a certain regular if small interest, with the prospect of a lottery bond.

Country society is the weight in the Republican balance. Whilst the towns may vote, hot-headedly, Nationalist or add deputies to the Revolutionary wing, the country will, on the contrary, send a man to Parliament pledged to moderate reforms. Yet, it would be wrong to suppose that materialism always guides the peasant in his political proclivities. Loyalty to the Republic will inspire him, sometimes, to sacrifices against his pecuniary interest. An instance was furnished by the Associations Law, which the country supported, though it often meant local loss. In the case of La Grande Chartreuse, the monks had established a vast and profitable industry and their charities in the district were without limits. Yet, when it became a question of Republican doctrine, the peasant voters supported the Government in its war upon the Orders. The solid Republicanism of the country is one of the safeguards of the continuance of the present system.

The Church once had a great hold over country society, but this is no longer true. Disestablishment has robbed

the priest of prestige, except amongst the Faithful. He is no longer a functionary receiving a stipend under the Concordat, but a free and independent minister of what, "au fond," many French people regard as a foreign institution. If the Church ceased to be Roman, and became Gallic, it would make, probably, greater progress. But, in any case, the power of the priest is not felt in Republican drawing-rooms to anything like the old extent, and, for the most part, the curé finds his friends at the château, where dwell the great folk of the region.

In the large towns, you have, of course, other elements entering. There are those whose existence circulates about the theatres and the "foyers" of intellectual endeavour. But in the country stimulus of the sort is wanting, and one would be surprised at the little reading done by the provincial French. Part of the "crise du livre" comes from the fact that authors find only an infinitesimal part of their circulation outside Paris and the great centres, nor are the papers read to the extent they are in England, except the local political organ, which is always run in somebody's political interest and attacks violently the other side, when it does not trumpet forth the virtues of the deputy, present or prospective.

The "week-end" house parties have not anything like the same vogue in France that they have in England. The country châteaux are inhabited for certain months of the year by rich and titled members of society, but entertainments are not on the same lavish scale as in the hunting counties of England. Theatricals take place, it is true, but social life is usually uneventful. The professional class of Frenchman is little inclined to leave its business occupations for long together. Among that class the "week-end" is practically unknown and a week's shooting or fishing, otherwise than in the months consecrated to recreation, is

almost unheard of. A day suffices, and the sportsman returns from the coverts the same evening to resume his professional pursuits on the morrow. From Paris a large region is shot over and hunted, including Rambouillet, the President's estate, to which the national guests, diplomats, and ministers are bidden from time to time; from the centres of provincial France, the same system is adopted. The shooting party rarely lasts longer than one day.

The Frenchman lives in the country for rest or to pursue some literary or scientific project. Very rarely does he install himself there with the object of entertaining, or of getting taken up by local society. If a functionary, he regards it as a mere stepping-stone to promotion; if a business man, he stays there because he must and in the hope of amassing a fortune sufficient to take him to the metropolis, where he may end his days in congenial surroundings.

French society, like English society, is made up of a thousand different elements representing conflicting ambitions. There is the exclusive learned society of Paris, the society that radiates from the Collège de France—the Paris that is the real intellectual Paris—the centre of advanced thought of the world; there is the obvious Paris “qui s’amuse,” the Paris of gay cosmopolitanism with more than a touch of the “rastaquouère”—the adventurer of amazing boldness and a doubtful past; then, there is the respectable conservative and “pot-au-feu” middle class, chiefly concerned with its own affairs, mixing little with the outside world, shy of strangers and caring not at all for the foreigner; and there is that other class, the functionary, which is a world apart, a little disdainful of the others. Then the soldier forms his own compartment in the social train; the politician belongs to another group, and, closely behind him—sometimes literally so—are the

financiers, speculators of all sorts, and a large nondescript class of "brasseurs d'affaires."

Whether we consider the Frenchman as an owner of the soil or whether we consider him as an intellectual worker in the towns, an engineer, a platelayer, a dock-labourer, a writer, a soldier, a sailor, a merchant, a dealer in antiquities, an actor, an artist, whatever his hold on social life, we generally admire him and admit his qualities. As to whether the edifice of which he forms part is becoming more consolidated, or is gradually being undermined by social forces, time alone will decide. In any case, the palliatives devised by temporizers in Parliament can no more stay the evil day—if such be the destiny of modern evolution—than Mrs. Partington's mop can dry up the ocean.



## CHAPTER IX

### PARIS TO-DAY AND YESTERDAY

IT is impossible within the limits of a chapter to trace in detail the development of this radiant city—still the pleasantest in the world to live in. It began with the islands in the Seine. Here is the cradle of the capital, which the Romans called Lutetia. Fronted by the Pont Neuf and backed by Notre Dame, it was protected by towers, of which only the names remain in the Grand and Petit Châtelet. In feudal times, knights, priests and soldiers grouped themselves about the strongholds, and, on the left shore, where is now the Latin Quarter, sprang into existence a great settlement of students, forerunners of those light-hearted folk who were presently to give the character of gaiety to this region. Philip Augustus built a wall, Charles V extended it, and the Fifteenth Louis converted the line of "bulwarks" into boulevards. The succeeding Bourbons put a new girdle about the town, which had outgrown its bounds.

The Revolution left little time, no doubt, for town improvements: the reformers were busy cutting off heads, not planting trees, and yet the Musée of the Louvre, as an organized collection, dates from that period. Napoleon gave much glory to the town and great schemes of municipal improvement. But the father of modern Paris is Baron Haussmann, the Third Napoleon's Prefect of the Seine. To his imagination and power of achievement are due the splendid avenues that radiate from

the Etoile. A vast sum of money was spent, but it was probably worth it. Though the most economical people in the world, the French know how to spend when the occasion demands. The splendid spaciousness of the West End has attracted capital, and sumptuous hotels and mansions have arisen to house the foreign millionaire.

Hausmann's spirit lives to some extent in the Municipal Council. It, also, would do things on the grand scale and is minded to sweep away the fortifications—now perfectly useless for military purposes and a mere dormitory for the Apaches—and, in their place, set up houses surrounded by gardens and public parks. Such a scheme would beautify and render more salubrious the "eccentric" districts of the city as well as vastly increase the rateable values. Part of this twentieth-century dream of progress concerns the utilization of the Palais Royal as a great central station to be connected by underground lines with the chief termini. A singular fate for the palace built for Richelieu, whose corridors have resounded to the red heels of the gallants and whose trees and fountains have overheard the secrets of grandes dames! In Balzac's day it was the gambling centre of the town, as the moving description in the "Peau de Chagrin" tells us.

Municipal reform deals hardly with romance. It sweeps ruthlessly. The beautiful and historic die daily in Paris. The speculative builder tears down the old to put up the "maison de rapport." It is the inexorable law. Nothing can resist progress, as we moderns understand it, in this essentially modern Paris. Beneath the ponderous wheels of Juggernaut lies crushed and bleeding much poetry of the past. Delightful old gateways have gone, fantastic doorways, wonderful old mansions that sheltered kings and princes, or some splendid fabric of the past, pinched and starved in its surroundings, looks no longer in its

place. These are the victims of the law of interpenetration, that logical and swift instinct of the French which makes them go straight when they build a road. Mme Récamier's Abbaye-au-Bois, where she held court to Chateaubriand, and other of her admirers, was sacrificed to the Boulevard Raspail—a great new pathway cut through the Quarter, which has opened up vistas unexpected and inspiring. The Rue de Rennes, which Municipal Councillors would lengthen into the historic Rue de Bonaparte, passes through the garden of the Carmes, with its dread memories of the September massacres, when one hundred and fifty priests were butchered by revolutionaries. This is one of the spots where history has been written—written in blood. Immediately behind the church of the Carmelites sat the Revolutionary Tribunal to decide upon the fate of prisoners. Above a short flight of steps is the narrow garret where Josephine de Beauharnais lay—captured with her husband, and little dreaming, in those days, of Imperial state. On the walls are still traces of the blood wiped from the sabres of those who had slain the priests in the garden; a peaceful sundial now marks the spot where fell the first victim.

History! The city is full of it, and this very quarter of the Rue de Vaugirard has more than its share. The church of St. Sulpice, near by, witnessed the wedding of Camille Desmoulins and Lucile Duplessis. It was a romance that affected the public, even in those cruel times. Of the crowd that came to see them wed, how many, I wonder, came to roar at them when they mounted the scaffold? a week's interval separating their deaths. When Desmoulins wrote tracts favourable to the Revolution, he little knew the tiger he was raising in the breasts of the people. Near by, at the Luxembourg, where sit the greybeards of the Republic, the condemned man wrote letters to his love that

are stained with tears. In the courtyard, where senatorial wisdom passes into the hall of assembly, the prisoners of the Terror took their exercise. Robespierre was brought here and refused admittance for want of room. Associations of a softer kind belong to the little-changed Renaissance garden, where Trilby and her admirers still walk hand-in-hand, unconscious of a prosaic world. It was here that Marie de Medici gave her fêtes.

The monastic calm of the streets about the church of St. Sulpice contrasts with the rude revelry of the Boul' Mich', with its corps of students moved, occasionally, to manifest out of sheer buoyancy of spirits. Time and modern exigencies have laid a rude hand upon this romantic country. It is hardly romantic any more. It is almost Bourgeois. The students are earnest folk to-day. Examinations require it. Few English people realize how hard these young men work. The mental endurance of the French and their capacity for continuous pains astonish even the laborious Germans.

Dominating this district is the Panthéon, which, once a church, is now a sepulchre. The dead have their politics as well as the living. Fate has pursued the Revolutionaries even in their graves. Some are "dépanthéonised," and others have assumed, in their stead, the crown of public recognition. Marat took the place of Mirabeau, posthumously declared to be a traitor to the cause. Then came Hugo, in 1885. Twenty years later it was the turn of Zola to be carried to the home of heroes. Dreyfus, a spectator of the honour done to his defender, was shot at and wounded by a military writer, named Gregori. As a witness of this exciting scene, there came to me the realization of the full force of party prejudice in France, since it vented itself upon a man's ashes. Here the beauty of a splendid ceremony, with its grandiose catafalque, its burning tapers and the statuesque figure of its guards, was

rudely disturbed by an exhibition of the cruellest sort of rancour and political spite.

The "Ancienne Noblesse," whom, by his gesture, the "demonstrator" intended, perhaps, to represent, inhabits the Faubourg, which, in its lower section, bisects the Boulevard St. Michel. The Boulevard St. Germain nominally stands for all that is left of the authentic nobility, though its wealthier members actually live near the Etoile. If, in their disdain of the Republic and all its works, they remain outside the movement of the day, they have yet a virtue less negative in its results: a wholesome freedom from all scandal. The Faubourg never appears in the divorce court, nor is it mixed in those disfiguring "affaires" which have been too frequent in the history of the last half-century.

A narrow street by the river, the Rue Guénégaud, harbours quite other memories. Here Mme Roland entertained Danton and Robespierre in her days of influence over the Girondins.

The ground where the Hôtel-Dieu stood, on the Left Bank, opposite Notre Dame, is saturated with history. This old hospital of Paris, which has disappeared in a cloud of dust, was quaint and interesting, though unworthy of its functions, judged in the light of modern medicine. It is the site of the Petit-Châtelet, which guarded the western end of the Ile de la Cité.

The destruction of the Hôtel-Dieu brought the curious old chapel of St. Julien-le-Pauvre into high relief. It, like the church of St. Séverin, close by, celebrated by Huysmans for its Gothic beauties, is losing its picturesque, if disreputable, border of old houses that lean against one another as if conspiring against the commonweal. The spoiling of the frame has affected the picture, but the change of externals cannot alter the cloistered sense and



meditative beauty of the interior, where light comes softly through coloured glass, wrapping the visitor in a cloak of mystery and contemplative calm.

The old grey Institut and La Monnaie (the Mint) remain unspoiled memorials of an age when the world was less fleet of foot, less haunted by the phantom care, with tranquillity enough to pause a moment by the Pont des Arts and gaze down upon the river, with its strange and distinctive population. There is the red-sashed labourer shovelling sand from barges, the dog-barber is hard at work clipping an old maid's darling, who strongly objects to the process ; a washerwoman, with blowzy face encircled in a bright kerchief, leans from the window of her bath-house, whilst a long line of fishermen, behind her habitation, are sublime in their attitude of patience. The bargee shows stalwart skill in the conduct of his craft, towed behind a puffing tug, and the swift steamers pass, bearing their burden of humanity from the suburbs. Upon the quay-side, the book-boxes of the second-hand dealers are perched upon the stone walls, and learned Academicians pause a moment, with bended back, to examine their treasures.

Napoleon lived on these quiet quays as a young man attending the Ecole Militaire. One wonders whether he felt the "genius loci" of this classic region as he dried his patched top-boots by the log-fire in his garret: the tiny apartment is still to be seen by those with a gift for discovery. Certainly, the riparian battlements form a delightful promenade for such as would contemplate the city. Especially at night, when the shadows fall upon the water, the spectacle is one of enchantment, recalling Venice. Boats dart beneath the bridges, their red eyes weirdly shining ; there is the hoarse voice of the siren, signalling the lock-keeper of the Pont Neuf and speaking of great affairs ; and across the dark, shadow-dancing

stream, are the myriad lights of the city, with its feverish activity—a city which never sleeps, and where the home-going roysterer meets honest labour at its toil in the markets or the streets, or some ghostly band of scavengers, fleeing the dawn like dark spirits of the night.

Notre Dame and Sainte Chapelle still speak of the glories of “la Cité,” of the days when there were eighteen churches upon the island. No building has had a more intimate connection with the Revolution than the Conciergerie. Delicate women were herded in its foul prisons: the victims of that terrible time all mounted the steps leading to the Cour de Mai. The Queen and Charlotte Corday, Mme de Bailly, the Abbess of Montmartre, generals and princesses, dukes and duchesses crossed the fatal threshold and, on the way, received the insults and the filth flung by the mob, which, with hungry eyes, gloated over the spectacle of aristocracy in distress. A railing still exists separating the actual prison from the women’s yard. Mme Roland, the pathetic Lucile Desmoulins, Mme de Montmorency touched it with their dresses, and Du Barry, one of the few women who trembled at the prospect of death, clung to it. Alas! everything has been changed within the prison, and the dungeon where Marie Antoinette was incarcerated during the last month of her life is completely altered.

Memories of the old days crowd about the Place des Vosges, where Mme de Sévigné lived, and Marion Delorme, and where Victor Hugo wrote some of his finest work. Architecturally, the Place has little changed, but its fine inhabitants have departed. Families of Jews of the old type live in the neighbourhood, and old men in gaberdines, and handsome girls—velvet-eyed and richly dressed, with the dark complexions of the race, attend the services of the neighbouring synagogue.

There is no part of Paris where signs of departing greatness are more pitifully apparent. The grand old mansions that housed the great folk of former days, many of them with distinguished histories, have been turned to the base uses of a petty commerce. In the Barres mansion in the street of that name, Augustin Robespierre was brought in with broken legs after his attempt at suicide from the Town Hall windows. On the morrow, he was sent by the Revolutionary Tribunal to the scaffold. Forty years later, there were revolutionary scenes in the Rue de Venise, where the last of the barricades of 1830 was erected. The "frondeur" spirit lives to-day in this quarter of Saint Merri, but, unfortunately, it takes the form of hostility to the police. The "révoltés" are not an interesting class.

The Arsenal Library, in the Rue de Sully, contains documents of absorbing interest that bear upon the history of France. Who can look unmoved upon the death certificate of the Man with the Iron Mask, Saint Louis' Book of Hours, with a portion of his royal robes, the record of the cross-examination of the Marquise de Brinvilliers in the celebrated poisoning case, Henri IV's love letters addressed to the Marquise de Verneuil, and the documents relating to the Affair of the Necklace?

Quite a different atmosphere is breathed when we come to the Halles: the great central markets of Paris. A sign with the figure of an avenging angel upon it—is it a delicate allusion to the police? betokens the haunt of Apaches—the Burglars' Maxim, it has been called. The building has been condemned by the Municipality. Near by, are the Caveau des Innocents and La Belle de Nuit, which, despite their titles, have no claim either to innocence or beauty.

Montmartre presents another sort of Paris, which needs no introduction to English or Americans. It is the classic ground of the tourist and deals in amusements of a peculiar

kind. Gone is the vogue of its "cabarets artistiques," of its chansonniers whom all Paris went to hear in the days of the Chat Noir. The modern survivals of these places are but pale shadows of their former selves, without the redeeming grace of the "Attic salt," which always seasoned the gibes of the former artistes. And yet there is a district of Montmartre extremely curious, which hides provincial calm and seclusion in its old-fashioned streets. Certain of the byways on the sacred Butte, behind the towering mass of the basilica of Sacré Cœur, preserve a delightful air of aloofness and have no part in those lurid and commercialized attractions that belong to the life of the lower and more accessible stretches of Montmartre. Chickens run about the road, the vine grows upon walls, there are country sights and sounds in a thatched cottage, and the crowing of cocks; this is a rural Montmartre unsuspected by the visitors, who content themselves with the garish pleasures of the slopes.

Then, when we come to central Paris, we think necessarily of the Boulevards. The difference is enormous between this great highway of to-day and yesterday. Fifty years ago, the Boulevards were still the resort of wit and fashion, they were still haunted by the "chroniqueur," by the financier, by the man-about-town. Everybody who was anybody took care to show himself in this great stretch of pavement from the Madeleine to the Bastille, or rather, in that section of it contained between the Théâtre des Variétés and the Place de l'Opéra. Now all is changed. This great thoroughfare is still interesting, but in a different way. It still reflects the life of the capital, but it is rather the tourist life than the real native, intimate life of Paris, the great cosmopolitan city. Whilst it has increased in amenities of life, it has lost immeasurably in charm. The "flâneur" has been improved out of

existence. How is it possible to "flaner" when automobiles travel at break-neck pace through the streets? and when all is whirl and bustle? And yet, when compared with London or New York, Paris is still a city of comparative leisure, where people manage to live simple and unaffected lives and, in spite of the growing price of things, contrive to save. O potent word in France!

There is, indeed, something changed from the Paris of the Empire. The brilliant spectacle of a Court, of people marching in the street to the strains of a band and crying "Vive l'Empereur!" is no more. Other times, other manners. The Paris of our fathers was a Paris of swinging signs: here a golden boot, signifying the industry of the shoemaker; there a stupendous key, such as a giant might use to gain entrance to his castle, to bespeak the locksmith, or a Brobdingnagian pair of scissors, symbolizing the tailor's trade. The houses almost touched. The narrow, dark little streets offered a striking contrast with the broad avenues of the present day. The restaurants had their regular habitués, who never changed. The most famous were Tortoni's, at the corner of the Rue Taitbout; Bignon's, in the Avenue de l'Opéra; the Maison Dorée, the Café Anglais and the Café Riche on the Boulevard des Italiens. The last two still exist, but their character has changed. In Balzac's day, a long line of footmen, with powdered wigs, stood before the door of the Café Anglais. Over the way, was the Maison Dorée. Whenever a fourth player was needed at cards, a signal issued from an upper window, and, presently, the required recruit was threading his way across the boulevard to join his friends.

From the balcony of this famous house, scenes of popular excitement were witnessed, the crowd crying: "A Berlin!" in the opening days of the war and that same crowd growling the sinister "A bas l'Empire" a few



months later. There was a brilliant gathering about the tables of the Maison Dorée in the early years of the Republic. Of that band scarcely any remain. "Between the pear and the cheese" there was a flow of wit and an exchange of badinage: the real conversational cuisine. This is the atmosphere in which books are born. The younger Dumas, Victorien Sardou, Aurélien Scholl, Massenet, Catulle Mendès were prominent members of the Boulevard Parliament. Many a piece of literature was beaten out, glowing, upon the anvil of the Golden House. It is within quite recent years that Tortoni's and the Maison Dorée have disappeared. To the last, the rings used by the guests to attach their horses were to be seen on the walls of Tortoni's.

The metamorphosis from a fashionable promenade to a bustling business thoroughfare, given up to a boisterous trade in cheap jewellery, phonographs, and cinematographs, has not been for the glory of Paris. If it is still a street far from the commonplace, if it is still the foyer of Paris news, the gathering ground of journalists, of business and professional men, it lacks its old cachet and distinction. Its fashionable vogue has passed and it has become the throbbing heart of a great business community, the centre of a cosmopolitan world. Persiflage and the light banter of wits and *littérateurs* have been exchanged for politics and the latest gossip of the Bourse. And yet, it has its fascination, this great broad sweep of pavement, which, in medieval times, marked the bulwarks of the city. Sitting at one of its numerous cafés, you may look on life in as varied an aspect as anywhere in Europe. Has not the "terrasse" of the Café de la Paix, where the Boulevard des Capucines broadens into the Place de l'Opéra, been called the "corner of the world"?

If wit and fashion no longer promenade on the Boulevard

of the Italians, at least there is such an assembly of cosmopolitans, such a rush and whirl of life, such a concentration of interest, such a continual feast of vivid impression as no other city presents. The Boulevards are, certainly, typical of modern Paris, of the vast change that has taken place in the economy of the city during the past fifty years. There is as much difference between medieval Paris and the Paris of the Revolution as between the city of the Second Empire and of to-day.

Change is visible everywhere—in the Latin Quarter, as elsewhere. It is only occasionally that youth and high spirits assert themselves, and kiosks are burned, as in the Dreyfus case, or authority “conspewed” because of a little misunderstanding on the subject of examinations. Yet the days are clearly gone of which Henri Mürger wrote so amusingly in “*La Vie de Bohême*.” It is hardly to be supposed that the ramshackle tenements in which his joyous heroes lived would now be tolerated by the ædiles. How can you be Bohemian in a brand-new house with gas and water on every floor? You must have houses almost touching to preserve that intimate feeling so essential to the real thing. Trilby-land has, indeed, changed since the days when Little Billy and his comrades made merry in a house in the neighbourhood of the *Ecole de Médecine*. Alas, it has now fallen to the house-breaker’s pick and its buoyant roseate dreams have disappeared with its walls. O that joyous band, how care-free it was! To-day the student is a serious soul. He takes the tramcar to his home of an evening and actually wears evening dress on ceremonious occasions!

Another part, which has changed with the changing years, is the Champs Elysées, which, in comparatively recent times, finished at the Rond Point. Hereabouts, was

the Jardin de Mabille. In Empire days—it hardly survived the Third Republic—it stood in the same relation to the life of Paris as the Cremorne Gardens to an older generation of Londoners. But, gone are the neighbouring ramshackle buildings, which housed thieves and desperadoes.

Paris has, however, many unspoiled corners where the fragrance of old times lingers, where the eye is captivated and the heart gladdened by some delightful souvenir. Such vestiges remain in the region of the Jardin des Plantes, one of the retired nooks of Paris. Others may be found on the Left Bank where, for the moment, one may believe oneself in another country, far removed from the stress and bustle of a great world-centre of affairs. The stream eddies round these chosen spots and leaves them almost untouched.

Intellectual Paris—how often it is disregarded by the stranger who speaks as if Maxim's and the Moulin Rouge constituted the whole city!—shelters itself in the region of the Sorbonne and the splendid Collège de France. It is a closed corporation, this intellectual world, save to those who possess the golden key of intellectual sympathy and comprehension—the real Paris, but the Paris unattainable to the casual tourist. This side is generally neglected and unknown by those who would guide our steps across the glittering pathway of the past.

If there is an unspoiled Paris of pure delight, the inhabitants of which combine culture and the highest civilization with much simplicity of life, there is equally the blatant pushful Paris of the soulless plutocrat. A vast change is passing, swift as a shadow across the face of the sky. The motor vehicles, replacing the three-horsed 'bus, and the electric undergrounds have carried off much that was attractive and leisurely in old Paris. Is it surprising that the Parisians have lost their gaiety since the war?

And how can they hope to recover it on German beer, drunk instead of the light wines of the country? If Paris yielded to the Prussians in 1871, to-day its conquerors are drawn from the two Americas. Lust of gold has been too much for light-heartedness. Much cattle, much care. The French grow rich. The happy whistler is still shirtless.

Even the aroma has departed, the subtle perfume of flowers which seemed to hang in the air of Paris. In its place is the rancid smell of motor-oil. The vulgar atmosphere of the Boulevards and the exotic character of the hotels, are further stages in corruption. Much of the old distinction has departed never, probably, to return. Yet the stranger recognizes what is being done for him in new hotels and arrives in greater numbers each year. It is the worship of the Golden Calf that is disturbing the dream of Paris—bearer of the proud title of “la Ville Lumière.”

As to the future of the city, it would seem to be again and yet again in the direction of wealth and greater wealth—of luxury and the cosmopolitan appeal. Yet, who can forget its dazzling history? As we leave the crowd behind and penetrate some old retiring street, which speaks in quiet accents of the days that are no more, we feel thankful that we know our Paris and can read its secrets.

And may there not be some new and strange destiny in store for this amazing city, which has witnessed bloody Revolution, Commune, Empire, Kingdom and Republic? For the moment, it seems to be in the grip of commercialism, the pleasure-ground of England and America, of Europe and the world in general; but to-morrow, the shiver of the unexpected may pass through its lethargic marrow, awakening it to new life and sensibility.

But whatever be the Paris of to-morrow, it must remain a glittering example—a warning, if you will—but likewise a stimulus of no common kind.

## CHAPTER X

### A POLITICAL PICTURE

**F**ORTY-FOUR Ministries have expired (Easter, 1911) since the foundation of the Third Republic. Those Ministries have been led by men of the prominence of Gambetta, the Duc de Broglie, Thiers, Jules Ferry, Fallières, Loubet, Waldeck-Rousseau, Clemenceau and Aristide Briand. M. Armand Fallières, the present President, had the distinction of conducting one of the shortest Ministries in the history of the Republic, his Government lasting a fortnight. In any consideration of the actual régime in France, it is as well to remember that the present Republic has only existed for a couple of generations. You cannot expect a work of great solidity to be effected in so short a time, so brief a space in the life of a nation. And the defects that are observable in the French system are largely traceable to the newness to office of the present ruling class. They are not accustomed to the saddle. Ministers, whose origin was humble, do not readily become habituated to the use and responsibilities of power. Civic courage requires "race" behind it. This may be a reactionary sentiment, but it is true. The virtues of the English system reside in the fact that its ruling classes have hitherto been born to the purple and have the coolness of nerve, which so often accompanies breeding, and is so essential a quality in times of crisis.

But circumstances are tending to give the dominant party



in France a sense of permanence in power. The result is that a type of man is being evolved who, Opportunist as he may be, can yet preserve a dignified attitude in the face of popular clamour. What is the tendency of to-day? Does France progress in the sense of a wider democracy? Or is she harking back to the days of kingship and Empire?

Let us take the point of departure with the point already gained. Compare, if you will, M. Thiers with Aristide Briand, who retired, after a second term of office, in the Spring of 1911. Thiers would now be regarded as hopelessly old-fashioned; certainly, his views are wide as the poles apart from those of the recent holder of the premiership. The man to whom history has given the proud title of the Liberator of the Territory, imagined a Republic which should prepare the way for a constitutional monarchy. Now, no one dreams of a constitutional monarchy—none, at least, save those who are hopelessly antiquated, or hopelessly Quixotic in their ideas. Aristide Briand is representative of France of to-day; he is the modern typical politician.

He began life with more than a coquetry of Socialism. In his younger days at the Bar—he is not yet fifty—he defended revolutionaries and anti-militarists. Part of his fame was gained by his speech on behalf of Hervé, notorious for his theories of a “*pacifisme à outrance*.” Another famous “*procès*,” in which he was engaged, entailed a defence of incendiarism as a weapon for strikers.

From such beginnings M. Briand has evolved into the moderate, even slightly conservative, statesman. He has changed his side of the barrier, to use the picturesque phrase of M. Clemenceau uttered in other circumstances. In doing so, he has brought all his baggage of oratory, all his arts of persuasion, to the conservation of order and to the consolidation of the work of the Republic. One of the

crimes imputed to him by the Jacobins of the Chamber, causing his resignation during his second Ministry, was that he held out the olive branch with too frank a hand to the Church party. Whatever our sympathies in the struggle between Church and State in France, we must feel that the actual document, pronouncing the divorce, was both seemly and statesmanlike. It threw the onus of rejection upon the Church, and the Church, being guided by an intransigent Pope, would accept no favours from a Government, which, in the person of the President of the Republic, had slighted its head. In returning the visit of Victor Emmanuel to Paris, M. Loubet (as I point out in Chapter VII) paid his respects to the Quirinal and disregarded the Vatican, though custom directed that the chief of a Catholic State should first visit the Sovereign Pontiff.

Statesmanlike or not, conciliatory or the reverse, the Separation Act has failed to satisfy Catholic opinion in France. The result of Clerical defiance is not easy to foresee, except as bringing upon the Church grave and insuperable financial difficulties. Nor does the future give warrant for optimism. In the schools, where the name of God is not allowed to be pronounced, where, as the Bishops have declared, the teaching is hostile to religion—by inference, if not directly—it is not to be supposed that citizens are being prepared who will become faithful sons and daughters of the Catholic fold. In the towns, the Church will subsist for years to come, no doubt. The position of the priest in rich parishes has positively improved under Separation, since generosity has been stimulated, and the stipend from contributions is larger than that received formerly from the State. But, in the country at large, the future of the Church is very black.

The protest of Catholic fathers and parents against the teaching in the *Ecoles Communales* (to which I allude in

Chapter VII) that found expression in the Chamber in January, 1910, receives a large justification in fact. It would be folly to pretend that the youth of the country is, in the strict sense of the word, as moral and as worthy as former generations. I use the word "moral" in its wide sense of the duty of one citizen to another—to embrace the whole conduct of man toward man. Most careful and impartial observers declare that a deterioration in the national character has manifested itself since the institution of the neutral education upon which Jules Ferry laid such stress when he formulated the compromise between Clerical and Anti-Clerical sentiment in 1883. It was then stipulated that the teaching in the schools should respect religion by avoiding any element of offence. It was never contemplated that the school teacher would abuse his position to fill the minds of his scholars with ideas reflecting on the authenticity of the Scriptures and by casting ridicule upon altruism and idealism, which are part of the glorious patrimony of France. There has been a distinct decline in idealism, a distinct rise in materialism. Such a phenomenon is observable elsewhere: in America notably, in England to a large extent; but nowhere has it made such ravages as in France. Under another heading I have attempted to show that this deterioration, this over-development of the material side of life, is largely responsible for the discontent that is eating like a canker into the heart of the working man of France.

Another cause why democracy is discontented is the rapid—the startlingly rapid—evolution of its leaders. The Socialist, come to office, does not satisfy, cannot satisfy, the political aspirations of his former friends. To hold a responsible office and, at the same time, to carry out the Socialistic ideal are incompatible things. You must be

false to one standard or the other. The French working man, seeing his former demagogue elevated to Ministerial place and power, is disappointed because the principles, once enunciated by his leader, are not put into practice. "Where is this millennium you promised me?" he asks. To promise the moon is one way to obtain election, but if the moon is not forthcoming, one must be prepared for a little unpopularity.

The legislation for the last twenty years of the Third Republic has represented the slow but logical application of the theories of the Great Revolution. The Anti-Clerical policy, inaugurated by M. Waldeck-Rousseau, with his famous Associations Law, requiring all religious Orders in the country to register themselves, was but the continuation in saner, more normal, conditions, of the great struggle of 1789. It was rendered inevitable—or, at least, ardent Republicans would have us believe so—by the revelations of the Dreyfus case, which showed the Church ranged with the enemies of the régime. Sooner or later, the conflict was bound to end in disestablishment.

It would be unwise to reopen the sores of the Affair. The unfortunate prisoner of Devil's Island has been rehabilitated, has had his uniform restored to him, has re-entered the army and has retired therefrom. To insist on the details of this momentous case would be a gratuitous reminder to a friendly nation of a gigantic judicial blunder compensated for, as far as these things can be compensated, by a magnanimous vote of the Chamber of Deputies. However that may be, the Dreyfus case has profoundly affected and modified French politics during the past ten years. M. Briand's Separation Bill of December, 1906, was the last word in this controversy. It is not for me to defend the work of the Republic against the Church, but it is at least curious that the

measure was acceptable to the Jews and the Protestant Churches, but unacceptable to the Church of Rome. One can only assume that, in his zeal for a purified Catholic Church in France, the Pope has misapprehended the true circumstances of the case. It can never be asserted that he met the other side half-way.

There was nothing particularly hurtful in the Public Worship Associations, which the law prescribed in place of the old vestries. The Government gave way on the question of the hierarchy and recognized that the episcopal assent was necessary before an association could establish its "bona fides." The Vatican has taken the futile course of kicking against the pricks. The Republic must win, unless an entire change takes place in public sentiment, causing people to veer towards the Church. This reaction might result from a renewal of Anti-Clerical activity which seemed probable after the resignation of M. Briand, who was declared to be too favourable to the Church.

It is impossible to withhold admiration from heroism, but heroism, when useless, becomes tragic. In "Church and Clericalism," I deal more particularly with this question. I show that if a renaissance is to be noted in the towns, it is otherwise in the rural districts. Subscriptions flow in the large centres; a certain missionary zeal is shown in the service of the Church; but difficulties of a material sort are cropping up daily in those large scattered parishes, which are obliged to rely on the services of a priest shared with adjacent localities.

After M. Briand put his hand to the framing of the Separation Law between Church and State, he exhibited, as I have said, moderation in his dealings with the Catholics. It is noteworthy that, in his famous Périgueux oration, delivered shortly after assuming office, he courted churchmen so openly that he raised the protests of many



of his followers, who felt that he was showing weakness in the hour of conflict. At that very moment, the country was ringing with the protests of the Bishops against the character of the teaching in the elementary schools. M. Briand attempted, momentarily at least, to realize that unrealizable dream, of drawing all men under him. M. Armand Fallières, President of the Republic, displayed a similar ambition in an audience with a prominent American, who afterwards repeated the conversation to me. "I wish to be the President of all France," said M. Fallières, "not merely of one section of it." But though divisions are slowly healing, it is not to-day or to-morrow that every Frenchman will look favourably, or even tolerably, upon the present Republic. This divergency of opinion—a divergency that is seen even in schooldays—constitutes the difficulty of ruling the country and satisfying the national conscience.

The Republican Governments of to-day are pressing forward the unification of the primary school with the object ever before them of unifying the patriotism of the Frenchman. You do not want two conceptions of patriotism in the country. You do not want children to be taught in one set of schools that it is a work of piety to tear down the Republic, any more than you want the children in another set of schools to be told that all the old ideals, the old forms of government, the ideals, even, of right and wrong, as founded on religion, are old-fashioned nonsense, the merest trickery, circulated for interested motives.

A sign of the changing spirit in France is the introduction of the Income Tax, which is likely to be voted in the course of 1911. Its principle has already been accepted by the Chamber of Deputies; it waits the sanction of the Upper House. The "contributions" are as old as

the present fiscal system. They are taxes on businesses, on doors and windows, furniture, etc. In their place comes this one direct personal tax in which a man is required to sacrifice a definite part of his income. It is somewhat curious that, whilst the tendency in France is towards direct taxation, such as the Income Tax and certain local imposts, which will take the place of the "octroi," in England the tendency is just the reverse.

Each successive Government casts about for ready means of shifting some part of the burden of taxation upon the shoulders of the general consumer. It is obvious that, for instance, an abstainer from alcoholic drinks and a non-smoker in England escapes a good deal of taxation of the indirect sort. I do not say that he should be penalized for his self-sacrifice or for his want of appetite, but an indirect tax that caught the two sections of the community, the abstainer and the moderate drinker, would obviously represent a fairer field of contribution.

Social reform is an expensive luxury, and the reason why French indebtedness is mounting by leaps and bounds arises from this fact that the roseate inventions of deputies to please advanced electorates have to be paid for in hard cash. Life has become an expensive matter in France—at any rate in the large towns. Gone are the days when it was possible to live comfortably with a family on £300 a year in any quarter of the French metropolis. The rise in price of commodities has been most marked in the past twenty years, and has resulted in all sorts of money-saving devices. That wonderful institution, the salamander, or slow-combustion stove, which heats most French houses of the lower-middle classes, is the direct result of the vast war indemnity which followed the disastrous issue of the campaign of '70-71. The people were taxed to their utmost capacity,

and, in order to make ends meet, they resorted to the most ingenious forms of economy, both in the lighting and heating of their homes.

The thrift and frugality of the French are their leading characteristics. The Act for securing pensions to workmen and peasants, which was one of the great achievements of the first Briand Administration, is hardly necessary in a country where every workman, and, more particularly, every peasant, saves by instinct a portion of his income. It is admitted that, in liquid capital, France is the richest country in the world. The savings per head of the people exceed those of other peoples. It is no uncommon thing for persons in quite humble circumstances, such as domestic servants, to have at least 25,000 francs (£1,000) in the bank. You cannot go into a post office in any part of France without seeing a Government Savings Bank book in the hands of some young member of the population. Frugality is ingrained. It arises partially from the fact that the French are at heart realist, logical, and intensely practical. They are, in many respects, much less sentimental than the English. That cold system of calculation, which enters into their marriage affairs, affects their daily habits. That the population in France makes no progress in numbers is directly due to that "*esprit d'épargne*," or saving habit, which prevents heads of households from undertaking more responsibilities than they can easily meet. A Frenchman is well aware that, in dividing up his fortune into, say, half a dozen portions, amongst as many children, he renders each—if the property, to begin with, is relatively small—only semi-independent and subject to the fluctuations of the labour market. It is the ambition of every French parent to provide a fortune for his offspring equal to his own ; hence, if he has five children, he has to provide

five fortunes. Obviously it is easier for him, in these days of competition and commercial stress, to confine his energies to safeguarding his resources, so that, after satisfying present needs and the education and professional preparation of his son, his estate shall pass to his heir intact.

If the peasantry is not exempt from avarice, the rich classes show a great shyness of taxation. The effect of the Socialistic propaganda in Parliament is to frighten the goose which lays the golden eggs. Though it is difficult to substantiate figures, I have had it confirmed that much capital has fled from France on the mere threat of the Income Tax. Owners of property object to the tax for a twofold reason. The first is that it is inquisitorial, prying into a man's affairs, with the possible result of damaging his credit by giving valuable information to a trade competitor—secrets are kept loosely in France—and secondly, because of the opportunity that it offers to Socialistic expropriation. It is easy for a legislature composed of deputies wishing to flatter the working classes to tax property practically out of existence. The Income Tax might become a dreadful weapon in the hands of Socialists. Already, as I have said, the mere threat of it has been sufficient to stimulate investment abroad. Millions of French francs have fled over the border to Russian, to German, Belgian, and Swiss undertakings. Some portion of the golden current has even turned in the direction of the United States, of which country, up to this moment, the French have fought somewhat shy. It is the undisguised object of the extremer men in the Socialist party to relieve the working classes altogether of fiscal burdens, so that the cost of the whole administration of the country would fall upon a limited class of rich men. The new Bill is based upon the propositions of M. Caillaux, Minister of Finance in the

Clemenceau Cabinet. Though it will undergo, doubtless, considerable change before it emerges from the Senate, its essential principle is the surtax, which places a heavy burden upon the shoulders of the wealthy. But this is a quite limited section of the country. The proportion of persons who make, for instance, £4,000 a year in France is extremely small compared with England, and, of course, smaller still as compared with the United States—the country of big incomes; so that merely a handful of the people—it is calculated not more than 11,000—would pay the greater part of this Income Tax, that is to say, the full tax under the various schedules and an additional tax. It is small wonder that the trade and commerce of the country became frightened at these revolutionary proposals, and that M. Briand, when forming his Ministry, took care to conciliate business interests by leaving out M. Caillaux from his combination.

The tendencies of modern France, therefore, are tendencies of some danger. The number of strikes under the Clemenceau Administration was notably large, exhibiting an alarming amount of unrest amongst the workers of the country. In the autumn of 1910, M. Briand was confronted with the difficulty of a general railway strike, which was only conjured by calling up the "cheminots" as military reserves. Then, again, there have been instances of insubordination in the public defence forces, particularly in the Navy, though it is quite possible to exaggerate the importance of these outbreaks. They sprang exclusively from the bad example of the arsenal hands, who, as I state in Chapter VI, were empowered to form a trade union, and were petted to an incredible extent by that eccentric administrator, M. Camille Pelletan, when Minister of the Marine. The great strike in the North of France after the Courrières colliery



disaster of 1906, and the curious revolt of the wine-growing departments of the South in 1908, are symptoms which the observer cannot disregard. Again, the mischievous activity of the Anarchists in Paris, affecting the provincial centres as well, in the weeks preceding May Day, is a proof that the anti-governmental and disorderly forces in the country quickly get out of hand. A large part of this unrest may be due to the disappointment of the masses at the non-realization of longed-for reforms; but there are other causes at work.

Anarchy, unrest, and insubordination flourish. Why? It would be foolish to deny the existence of poverty in France; yet one does not see the distressful sights in Paris, Marseilles, Bordeaux, or any of the large towns in France that are so frequent in London and provincial England. There are no "thirteen millions on the verge of starvation," as Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman is reported to have said of England. Practically there are no unemployed. There was a curious instance of that during the winter of 1908-9. After a heavy snow-storm it was practically impossible to obtain labour to clear the streets. A thousand brooms could not be requisitioned in an hour or two, as was certainly the case in London, where the Municipalities had no lack of unemployed to choose from. Nearly every man in this favoured country has work to do if he will do it, and savings upon which he can draw in time of need. The fact, also, that his wife or female companion works is a source of strength. In French towns you do not see numbers of women spending their husband's earnings uselessly or on drink; they work and bring their earnings to the common fund. Hence, though the general standard of wages is lower than in England, the net income of the households is higher, because both husband

and wife contribute. One of the advantages of a protected agricultural industry is that when labour fails in the town it can be employed in the country. This balance between the country and the town establishes the economical equilibrium of France.

The prosperity of the working classes stands revealed. This being so, why is there this endemic agitation, which causes mobilizations of Army Corps and brigades of police? It would be absurd to say that the wage-earners have no grievances. Every wage-earner has a grievance, but I shall not be beside the mark if I say that a large part of the unrest which makes itself so visible in the newspapers is really a case of disturbed statics. It is the cork bobbing up in the bottle. The proletariat is well off; it is in a state of ebullition merely because it is well off. In some senses, it is a symptom of health. In any case, this constant agitation, this constant threatening of a general strike, should not be taken too seriously as indicating real misery. Much worse is it when the lower classes are so broken-spirited that a column of them marching, ostensibly to find work, can be led by a single policeman. Such sights are to be met with in the suburbs of London in times of acute distress. Remember, also, the Latin blood. The Gallic temperament, plus a real or an imaginary grievance, is certain to boil over and require force to repress it.

The tendencies of twentieth-century France may not be unwholesome tendencies in the main, but they present a point of danger. The Anarchists and the Revolutionaries may gain too great a hold in working upon the susceptible elements of the population, and there may, in consequence, be great harm done to the solid interests of the country. But I rely on the good sense of the people and the strength of the Government to see that splendid notions of liberty do not degenerate into chaos and licence.

## CHAPTER XI

### FRANCE AND HER FOREIGN RELATIONS

THE war of 1870-71 left France exhausted and without friends. The Republic was confronted with the tremendous task of reconstituting her military forces and finding allies in Europe. To achieve the former, she had to reconcile universal conscription with universal suffrage; to achieve the latter to marry a modern democracy to a medieval autocracy. Both courses had their special dangers. High social development at home is often incompatible with a strong policy abroad, just as military efficiency is affected by Socialism and anti-militarism. As to the "mariage de raison" with Russia, it raised in the breasts of advanced democrats just the sentimental objections that might be expected from sons of the Revolution and inheritors of the Rights of Man. Moreover, certain difficulties of a social character arise in establishing close and continuous diplomatic relations between a republic and an aristocratic government. The fact remains that, notwithstanding weaknesses displayed, France has escaped any serious military adventure since the disastrous years of the great war. It is quite possible that even the risks she has admittedly run during that period have been exaggerated. M. de Blowitz' famous correspondence in "The Times," concerning the intentions of Germany to attack France in 1875, on the cynical pretext that she had not been

sufficiently crushed in the conflict four years earlier, is somewhat discredited in recent memoirs. The Bismarckian expression "to bleed France white" had, perhaps, a good deal of bluff in it. But it is certain that the Tsar, Alexander II, shared the apprehensions of France and intervened in her interests and those of the European equilibrium.

Again, in March, 1905, thirty years later, France was in the throes of a war-scare, as the result of which M. Delcassé was dismissed from the Quai d'Orsay by M. Rouvier, at that time President du Conseil. M. Delcassé's memorable speech in the Chamber three years later, in defence of his policy, declared: "We were threatened with war, but no war came, because you cannot with impunity declare war on a great country like France, which has strengthened its position with alliances and agreements."

It is a matter for argument whether the probabilities of war between great Powers do not diminish in direct proportion to the growing complexity of international exchanges and the sensitiveness of the money centres of the world. As the author of "The Great Illusion" (whom I quote elsewhere in this book) points out, there can be no seizure of an enemy's property without the operation reacting unfavourably upon the credit of the aggressor.

Fortified by her alliances and friendships, France is practically secure from danger. This is the theory upon which M. Delcassé conducted his Foreign Ministry. It was, also, the opinion of Gambetta, who declared that France was unattackable if supported by Russia and England. This was before the days either of the Grand Alliance or the Entente Cordiale. M. Delcassé's efforts were bent towards strengthening the two props of French policy, and yet, at one time—even in his own tenure of office—there seemed nothing more unlikely than an Anglo-French rapprochement.

If the Russian Alliance is a marriage of interest, and there is plenty of reason for so regarding it, the Entente Cordiale may be considered the romance of Foreign Politics. And the Prince Charming who wooed and won the lady was Edward VII. France and Russia were bound to come together by the force of circumstances. Both had need of the other. If the union has been a disillusionment for the one, the other, at least, has found the solid satisfaction of a large "dot." It is computed that a sixth of the national fortune of France—1,500,000,000 sterling—has, in some shape or form, found its way into Russian coffers, as the result of the Alliance which was consecrated by the document of August 22, 1891. The two nations were undoubtedly drawn together by the fact that Germany had seen fit to transform her alliance with Austria into the Triple Alliance, a few years earlier. Russia felt that this triangular arrangement was as much directed against her as against France. A common danger makes common friends, especially after Russia had performed a signal service to the future ally in 1875.

Pro-Russian policy in France took a definite step forward when the Quai d'Orsay advised the Bulgarians, who had applied for support against Russia, to make their peace with St. Petersburg. Then a Russian loan, underwritten by French bankers, appeared on the Paris market, and was eagerly subscribed. Before that time, Russia found her financial support in Berlin and Holland. Since this first tangible proof of friendship, the public indebtedness of the Bear to his obliging neighbour has reached the sum of seventeen and a half milliards of francs. This is only part, of course, of the heavy premium paid by France for insurance against invasion. If, from time to time—particularly during the Russo-Japanese war, and before England came to an arrangement with her ancient rival in Persia and



India—there was grave anxiety as to the security of capital sunk in Russian Government bonds, oil fields, pine forests, cotton factories, Siberian mines, and wheat fields, it was natural enough. But fears as to the financial situation never caused a panic, principally because of the clever dispositions of the Government acting in accord with financial corporations. Speculation was stopped on the Bourse by decreeing that no stock was to be bought for which the whole amount had not been paid, nor were orders to sell to be received without the vendor being in possession of the scrip. In this way market fluctuations were avoided, and, by judicious purchases on behalf of the Government, the price remained at a reassuring figure. Moreover, authorized opinion declared itself optimist, and said that a nation having the vast resources of Russia and a public debt not amounting to more than £8 per head of the population was quite sound. Despite appearances of corruption and maladministration, there was the unanswerable argument that Russia has always paid her coupons, even during the Crimean War.

The signing of the offensive and defensive treaty by M. Ribot, French Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the Baron de Mohrenheim, Russian Ambassador to Paris, was accompanied by a great interchange of courtesies. Admiral Avellan's squadron came to Toulon, and his sailors were received with extraordinary enthusiasm in the streets of Paris. These scenes were repeated on a grander scale when the Tsar and Tsarina visited France. If, on the second visit, there seemed to be some cooling of enthusiasm, it was due to the impossibility of maintaining political passion at fever heat. When M. Loubet, in imitation of M. Félix Faure, went to Russia, there was still a semblance of warmth in the greetings, but President Fallières' rendezvous with Nicholas II at Reval, in the

summer of 1908, was regarded as a visit of ceremony, and little more.

"Too many flowers" have killed popular sentiment for the alliance with Russia just as, according to some, they threaten to stifle the Entente with England. But there are more solid reasons for reservation in the case of Russia. First of all, there is the enormous money stake which, one is entitled to believe, cannot be increased—this probably explains Russian anxiety to obtain entrance to the English market—and, secondly, the astounding revelations of Russian weakness in the war.

France has every right to remember the deplorable failure of the ally in the Far East. She saw, with growing disquiet, the disappearance of blood and treasure—her own treasure—in the ill-starred Manchurian adventure. The guarantee against German invasion crumpled up—men, money, and ships hopelessly engulfed—in that terrible conflict with the Japanese. M. Delcassé's optimism had taken him too far; he refused to believe in the war until Japan had launched her first "coup," and he carried most of the nation with him. The shock of revelation was the greater.

But a sharper comment was given to events by the conduct of Germany. Russian arms had met with a severe reverse at Liao Yang, and again at Mukden. In that very month of March, 1905, the German Emperor disembarked at Tangiers. This action imposed a check upon the mission of M. Saint-René Taillandier to the Sultan of Morocco and to the policy of M. Delcassé.

To have an exact comprehension of the situation, one must go back to earlier events. The new Entente Cordiale with England was sealed on April 8, 1904, by a treaty, which recognized, amongst other things, the special privileged position of France in Morocco. As Powers directly interested, Italy, and, after lengthy pourparlers, Spain,

signified their assent to the principle of French preponderance in Morocco. On the other hand, Germany, which had made no move of protest when the treaty was actually signed—expressing, indeed, indifference on the ground that German interests were not affected—now assumed an attitude of frank hostility. To testify to her grievances, she called a conference of the Powers.

Recognizing in this action German bluster, M. Delcassé was inclined to disregard the invitation to the waltz, whereupon the Wilhelmstrasse developed its plan. A special emissary, Prince Henckel von Donnersmarck, was dispatched to Paris. He let it be known that Germany had a serious complaint against the Republic. He alleged that France had not officially communicated to his Government the terms of the Anglo-French compact; that she was assuming in her conversations with the Sultan the rôle of mandatory of Europe, which had not been confided to her, and that German interests in Morocco were being injured. This was followed by the convocation of the Powers to the Conference of Algeciras.

In his alarm at this language, M. Rouvier, then Premier of France—with the timidity of a financier in face of international complications—resolved to sacrifice M. Delcassé, whose policy was incriminated. The famous Foreign Minister, who had occupied the Quai d'Orsay since 1898, was forced to resign and Germany scored her first diplomatic triumph in the teeth of the Anglo-French accord.

There is reason to believe that England offered her aid to France, but that the latter felt incapable of resistance. An article in one of the Boulevard organs declared that England had expressed her willingness to throw an army of 20,000 men into Schleswig-Holstein. Supposing such an offer were possible, France was scarcely in a position to avail herself of it. A hasty inspection of the forts on

the Eastern frontier showed weakness in guns and ammunition. General André's rule in the army with its system of spying and informing had been disastrous to "esprit de corps." In the Navy matters were worse. The curious administration of M. Camille Pelletan, the Socialist Minister of Marine, had disorganized the service afloat. The fleets of France were obviously unprepared for war. In her extremity, France yielded and M. Rouvier, in Cabinet council, received the resignation of his Minister for Foreign Affairs. This deplorable failure in front of the enemy, as an historian of the time says, was not even covered up by the resignation, "en bloc," of the Cabinet. It was the public consciousness of unpreparedness that brought about the downfall of M. Delcassé, a consciousness which, if he shared, he did not allow to affect his policy. It is evident that he believed that Germany had no real intention of attacking France. The result seems to prove him right.

It was a time of alarm and humiliation, only comparable with the events that preceded and followed Fashoda. In private as well as in his great public vindication, quoted in an earlier chapter, M. Delcassé expressed his belief in the ability of France to disregard the threats of Germany: all that was necessary was a firm front. But this confidence was not shared by other members of the Government, and, whilst men and stores were being hurried eastward, the pilot in foreign waters was ignominiously dropped.

Before the Conference of Algeciras had assembled, the German Emperor had paid a visit to the Sultan of Morocco at Tangiers and declared that his policy was directed towards maintaining the independence and integrity of the country.

Notwithstanding these inauspicious beginnings, the Conference at Algeciras was less unfavourable to France

than might have been expected. It was apparent, after a few sittings, that Europe was not with Germany in her pretensions to interfere with the work of "peaceful penetration" by the French in Morocco. England was able to render effective support for the first time since the signature of the Anglo-French treaty two years before.

The genesis and development of the Entente Cordiale form one of the most interesting chapters in Anglo-French relations. Friendship with England is now one of the essential pivots of French foreign policy, which the most Chauvinist Ministry would not dare to disturb. M. Paul Deschanel, at one time President of the Chamber of Deputies, very properly says that Anglo-French hostility, after the war of 1870-1, was "*un des plus grands contre-sens de l'histoire.*" Bismarck contrived to keep France and England divided over the question of Egypt. In November, 1898, Marchand and his little company of Sudanese were forced to evacuate Fashoda. Fifteen years before, the French had allowed the English to establish themselves in the valley of the Nile. Though this belated attempt to reopen the Egyptian question was, in the nature of things, foredoomed to failure, the actual incident stirred the nation to its depths and embittered feelings.

The unmeasured criticism of the French people and of their jurisprudence, which appeared in the English Press at the time of the Dreyfus case, served to keep open the sore. The effect of this hostility towards England was to encourage an Entente with Germany. That eminent man of letters, M. Jules Lemaître, was one who preached reconciliation with the conquerors of thirty years before. Nor, of course, did the tone adopted by the Boulevard Press during the Boer War and the ferocious joy with which it hailed British defeats at the hands of the Transvaal farmers tend to promote political agreements. The change



in sentiment effected by the visit of King Edward to Paris, in 1903, was almost miraculous. The French admired the courage and courtesy which inspired this step, made rather against the advice of diplomacy. Most official personages considered that the Royal overture to the new concert had come too soon. But the event showed them to be wrong.

Like Cæsar on an historic occasion, Edward VII came and saw and conquered. The ill humour of the Parisians could not resist the bonhomie and geniality of him who, as Prince of Wales, had found the road to their hearts. The plot of a Nationalist demonstration against King Edward, if it ever amounted to a plot, came to naught. To his honour, Paul Deroulède, one of the chiefs of the Nationalist party (then nearing the conclusion of his exile at San Sebastian for his attempted "coup d'Etat" at the funeral of Félix Faure) discountenanced the unmannerly projects of a part of his followers. There was no demonstration. If the cheers reported in some of the English papers only existed in the amiable imagination of correspondents, at least the demeanour of the crowd was irreproachable. The visit was one of the boldest as well as one of the happiest strokes of policy ever invented by the sovereign of a great people, and its effect was almost instantaneous.

It was followed by a number of important events consolidating what was soon to prove a union of hearts as well as a union of policies. M. Loubet, President of the Republic, paid a return visit to London, where his reception was of the most cordial character; then came the visit of French deputies to London, followed, in the same year (1903), by the first of the diplomatic instruments: a treaty of arbitration between the two countries. English M.P.'s crossed to Paris in November of that year, and in the following spring came the corner-stone of the Entente,

the treaty regulating colonial differences and establishing the principle of preponderating influences in Egypt and Morocco. After this treaty, came the visit of the French fleet to Portsmouth, the sojourn of the Conseil Municipal of Paris in London, the reception of the L.C.C. in Paris and the official entertainment of M. Fallières by the British nation.

Then out of the blue fell the bolt from Germany. It was evident, protestations of indifference to the contrary, that the neighbour across the Vosges was profoundly piqued at the rapprochement between France and England. Her brusque change of front was the more remarkable because she had lavished attentions upon France. Politicians of a more or less representative sort were singled out by the Kaiser for the bestowal of marks of sympathy.

As to Anglo-German relations, they appeared, to the French eye, to be excellent down to 1901. Notwithstanding the outburst occasioned by the Kruger telegram, there were diplomatic negotiations between the two peoples ending in conventions relating to Samoa and China, and, a few months later (in 1901), the British squadron joined itself with Germany and Italy in a naval demonstration in Venezuelan waters. It is true that this action was scarcely approved by the British people, but the popular attitude escaped notice on the other side of the Channel, where only the fact was seen of an apparent identity of policy. What, then, was at the bottom of this change of front in England? French students of foreign politics will tell you that the underlying cause was the discovery by England of a "double jeu" on the part of Germany. It was the duplicity of the Wilhelmstrasse that changed the current of British diplomacy.

One of the pious beliefs of Professors at the School of Political Science and of the dabblers in diplomacy on the

Boulevards is the inevitableness of war between England and Germany. The latter's challenge of British naval supremacy, as well as her invasion of the markets of the world to the detriment of British commerce, is held to be sufficient ground for the eventual collision. It is for this reason that England has sought the friendship of France: she has need of the neighbour's big battalions. The Entente Cordiale has for parents the common danger of German aggression and the common interest in maintaining the "status quo."

As to the French attitude towards Germany, signs are not wanting that the Kaiser's assiduous if somewhat brutal courtship of Marianne has not been without its effect. There is a large party in the State, principally connected with business and commercial interests, which affects to believe, in the words of Lord Salisbury, that the country has "put its money on the wrong horse." "We should have approached Germany," they say. "Such a policy would have had the effect of reducing our armaments, which are too heavy for mortal shoulders to bear." Obviously, this "état d'âme" is far from "la Revanche." Yet the French, as a nation, are a proud people, and forty years of peace have not sufficed to efface the memories of the war from the older generation. The lost Provinces will have to be restored or, at least, neutralized, before there can be any real understanding between the two peoples.

However that may be, England and, in spite of new turns in policy of the Wilhelmstrasse, France are bound in opposition to German dominance. British policy has always been directed against a European hegemony. It was this resistance to the dominance of one State over another that led to British victories in the past over the fleets of Holland and Spain. Napoleon felt the weight of

the same calm, persistent policy, when he endeavoured to isolate England and to establish a Continental Blockade. Great Britain has always struggled, and struggled effectively against an agglomeration of power. Her very name of "Perfide Albion" is derived from the fact that she has always detached herself from a Power which has shown a tendency to become too strong, in order to bolster up the weak, which was in danger of being absorbed. She was, therefore, pursuing her inevitable policy of erecting barricades against European dominance when she invited France to liquidate outstanding differences and to add her signature to a friendly compact.

With their natural quickness of perception, the French realized the moral and material advantages of a closer union with Great Britain. They saw the importance, even without an alliance—for none exists—of having on their side the formidable naval strength of England, with its ability to strike at and destroy the enemy's fleet, hamper its merchant service and police the seas. At the same time, a certain anxiety accompanies the satisfaction. The penalty of being linked to greatness is to follow where greatness leads. France has given hostages to fortune in her Eastern frontier; she will have to pay for the "pots cassés." She is the buffer state. Though England's naval action would, no doubt, be absolutely effective in its own sphere, the destruction of the sea-borne commerce of Germany would not avail to prevent the invasion of the soil of France. The greater the damage inflicted by England, the greater the indemnity exacted of France.

There are some who pretend that there is positive danger in this friendship with England, on the ground that it will involve France in all sorts of adventure. John Bull is the foolhardy youth who leads his companions into mischief. British bellicosity is encouraged by the thought

of the great army of France, which would be behind every military enterprise. From this point of view, no doubt, England made a blunder in tactics in opposing the Channel tunnel, which would have enabled her to be victualled from the Continent and to draw her military supplies therefrom, during the period of hostilities.

Nor must it be forgotten that the Transvaal War proved a bad advertisement to British arms. Though the strong patriotic spirit prevailing in England, which induces young men to join the Territorial forces, is fully acknowledged, no Continental expert would admit that England has, in his sense, an army at all. Her officers are a "chic" body of sportsmen, who take off interest in military affairs with their uniforms. It is firmly held in France that England cannot look for military salvation until she has adopted conscription.

Yet, apart from these arguments of financial and professional opinion, there is general satisfaction in France over the renewal of that friendship which existed in the days of Louis Philippe, and again in the Second Empire, but perished without leaving any fruit. Even those who take a most "terre à terre" view of international politics, realize that England enables France to hold her own in diplomatic conversations. Without her partner in the Entente, France would have emerged diminished from Algeciras and, also, from the negotiations resulting from the incident of Casablanca, in which German agents assisted deserters from the French Foreign Legion to escape. The Eastern neighbour is likely to hesitate to attack if, in the process, she loses her merchant shipping. It was clearly necessary, after the shattering of the Russian power in Manchuria, to find a guarantee.

Morocco has fulfilled the predictions of those who declared that it would prove a hornets' nest. Such, indeed,



has been the case. Difficulty has succeeded to difficulty. The problem is twofold. There are Moroccan tribesmen living in fertile valleys, who are serious husbandmen and faithful, if fanatical, Islamites. On the other hand, there are the nomads of the desert, who find difficulty in living except by plunder. The agricultural zone is mainly in the interior of the country, whilst the inhospitable region, which provides little nourishment for those who inhabit it and the caravans who cross it, is a sort of Bad Man's Land, where marauders roam over the line of the Algerian frontier, twelve hundred miles long. It is in watching this border-line that the Algerian troops find their chief employment. General Lyautey, who until recently had the high military command, adopted the policy of inserting a wedge of settled tribesmen between Wild Morocco and Algeria.

On the whole, the scheme works well, and "pacific penetration" has come to have a real meaning, symbolizing the constant efforts of the French to bring order out of Moroccan turbulence and incoherence. Her eighty years of occupation of Algeria have not been without their effect upon Morocco, with whom various accords have been made, commencing with 1845. It is a sign of pacification when fifty thousand Moroccans cross into Algeria, each year, to take part in field work. A French writer says that "despite the Act of Algeciras, the Moroccan question has become a Franco-German question and nothing more." Notwithstanding a "détente" and a professed renunciation of German policy in Morocco, there was a sudden renewal of Bismarckian policy in July, 1911, in the dispatch of a gunboat to Agadir "to protect German interests," though none could see that they were jeopardized. Yet if the future of this inchoate country is still dark, it no longer depends upon the ambition of Germany, but has become a matter for French and Spanish co-operation and activity. And yet

one cannot forget that it was the great battle-ground of Teutonic diplomacy. Fifteen days after Admiral Rodjestvenski's naval force was destroyed at the battle of Tsu Shima, Germany executed a "volte face" in regard to Morocco, discovering interests where none had been suspected. Since that time she has undoubtedly acquired a financial stake in the country, but the bulk of the commerce remains with France, if only because of her geographical position. The volume of French trade with the Shereefian Empire is about two millions annually.

"Les amis de nos amis sont nos amis." It was natural that England, having concluded a treaty with France, should be favourably disposed towards the partner of France. Yet, originally, negotiations with Russia were inspired with the idea of regulating old-standing disputes in different parts of the world. It was only afterwards that their European import was realized. To some there appeared an incompatibility between the Anglo-French rapprochement and the Franco-Russian alliance. One or other was certain to give way under the strain of divergent interests. This, at all events, was the opinion of a prominent German writer. But France found in the reconciliation of ally and friend new sources of moral strength and authority. The consequence of the accord between England and Russia in 1907, was momentarily to divert Russian policy from Berlin and Vienna to London and Paris.

England's settlement of the Persian and Indian difficulties with her old rival was almost simultaneous with a French arrangement with Spain on the subject of Morocco, which encountered for a time, serious obstacles at Madrid. In the same month of May, 1907, England likewise concluded an agreement with Spain, thus forging fresh links in the chain of diplomatic understandings determining the status of France in the Mediterranean. Though there

were no military clauses in the Franco-Spanish accord, the instrument "marked progress," as M. Tardieu says "in the intimate policy of three peoples."

Even more interesting is the history of Franco-Italian relations. Under the influence of Bismarck, Crispi pursued a policy admirably calculated to keep the "Latin Sisters" apart. Of the two, Italy was the greater sufferer. The denunciation of the treaty of commerce between the two countries resulted in great loss to Italy. A vast amount of French capital was withdrawn. Nor was compensation found in close political union with Germany. It was only when Crispi's hand was removed and his policy reversed that the country felt the impulse towards a larger destiny.

Improved relations date from the accession of Victor Emmanuel III to the throne, in 1900. They sprang, in part, from the assurance of France that she had no ulterior designs upon the Tripolitaine, in return for which Italy waived any claims she might have upon Morocco. This was an Act of Renunciation on her part, for Northern Africa has always tempted her. In 1870, it was publicly proposed in Rome to extend the domination of United Italy to Corsica or Tunis. Both have seemed to Italian Imperialists "natural colonies," as well as Algeria, the Tripolitaine, and even Egypt. Italy's adherence to the Triple Alliance has been described as the outward expression of her grievances in the Mediterranean. The mitigation of those grievances blunted the apex of the triangular agreement, rendering it less a weapon of offence against France. When, in 1902, the compact was renewed, M. Delcassé was able to say in the Chamber of Deputies that, nowhere, the aspirations of the two nations came into conflict.

Thwarted colonial ambitions thrust Italy into the arms of Germany, despite Magenta and Solferino; in the same

way, M. Loubet's visit to Rome and the rupture of the Concordat played the game of Teutonic diplomacy. From her break with the Vatican, France has lost influence in the Near East as the Christian Protector—to the benefit of both Germany and Italy. Anti-Clericalism, therefore, whatever its effects at home, has diminished French prestige in the Orient, and generally weakened her position abroad by diverting activities useful to expansion.

The ultimate business of foreign policy is the conservation of influence and the maintenance of peace. What is the tendency of French policy abroad? Is it towards Chauvinism, towards Imperialism, towards new conquests for the flag, towards an enlargement of Empire, towards a material aggrandizement? No: France seeks neither gold nor territory—to employ the words of Lord Salisbury on a famous occasion. By the very nature of things, by the tendency of her parties, to-day, France is prevented from even contemplating a war of conquest. If Morocco eventually falls to her, it will be as the result of a slow siege, of a policy of penetration, aided, no doubt, by some campaign such as the Relief Expedition to Fez in 1911. The principles of democratic government are peace and prosperity at home. No nation has secured so great a store of wealth. The French peasant's "bas de laine" is proverbial. Having more liquid money than other people, he is less inclined to fight to obtain more—for modern wars are mainly commercial. That is the natural law. Prosperity is conducive to peace abroad if not to contentment at home—having in mind the French character.

Socialism is one factor in the maintenance of peace. The theory of universal brotherhood is clearly at variance with the launching of one citizen army against another. Conscription is, therefore, a powerful argument in favour

of peace amongst the nations. It is hardly to be imagined that Universal Suffrage is going in cold blood to vote for turning its own sons into food for powder. Nor must it be forgotten that the Foreign Legion bears the brunt of the colonial wars of France. Jingoism would die if universal service were adopted in England and America. The liability of every citizen to serve with the colours in the prime of his manhood has a most sobering influence upon a bellicose temperament.

Anti-militarism, which has its bearing upon foreign policy, must not be exaggerated. It is merely the passing phase of revolt against that system which has placed its iron heel upon the neck of the peoples of Europe. In its more judicious aspect it has assumed the form of the Peace Movement, to which some of the most enlightened minds have given adherence. But if the trumpet note of patriotism were to sound, if there were a call to defend the soil from the invader, be assured that defections from the ranks of the national army would be very small in France. Meanwhile, we have to consider that the essential policy of the Republic must be pacific. Intellectually in advance of any nation in the world, the French have been the first to become infected with that microbe of over-refinement against which Apostles of the Strenuous Life raise a warning voice. "What folly to be asked to cut the throat of a human being simply because he happens to belong to another nation" say these doctrinaires, with a paralysing philosophy. In their more active form, these theories are held by quite limited bodies of Frenchmen, but Socialism in the abstract continues, in France as in Germany, to make insidious advances. Perhaps the one fact balances the other.

The Quai d'Orsay must necessarily conform its policy with that of the governors of the day. War, whether



successful or otherwise, would be disastrous to the Republic, and its abstinence from all provocation is the logical outcome of the principles enunciated from the Parliamentary tribunes. A successful war would mean a successful leader, and that leader would probably find an open way to the Elysée and a dictatorship. Military disaster, on the other hand, might bring back the Commune, notwithstanding the gigantic fiasco of the last experiment. To wage a European war with impunity, it is necessary to have—amongst other things—a solidly established régime. Who can say, with confidence, that the present French system would stand the shock, either of success or failure? Obviously, the best course is to continue in the unheroic paths of peace. Nor is France alone in her reluctance to embark upon military adventures. With the exception of England, what dynasty is sufficiently firm upon the throne to enable the monarch to enter “with light heart”—to again quote the ill-fated expression of Emile Ollivier, on the eve of the Franco-Prussian war—upon a European campaign?

The effects of a pacific policy are seen everywhere in French action abroad. The symbol of her activities is the olive branch, and not the big stick, in world politics. She exercises the calming influence. A “*détente*” being visible in her relations with Germany, France is, at the present moment, less menaced probably than at any time since the “*alerte*” of 1875. Even if Europe were content to stand by and see it done, a new attempt to crush France is almost inconceivable. To her has come the peace that is the reward of inoffensiveness. Though this is not the rôle that her most ardent sons would wish for her, France must pay the penalty of hyper-civilization, of high social development and overflowing wealth.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE ROMANCE OF COLONIAL EMPIRE

IT was only yesterday that it was customary to indulge in much cheap wit at the expense of France as a colonizing agent. We were told that many of her colonies had as many "fonctionnaires" as "administrés"; that none was self-supporting, and, finally, that the whole system of empire-building overseas was a gigantic failure, an expensive farce. Even now there is truth in the suggestion that the French are not naturally colonists; the young man does not emigrate if he can help it. His pulses do not throb at the thought of vast dominions where the musk ox roams, of rivers teeming with fish, where the beaver builds its dam, nor of fertile plains only awaiting the plough—of virgin forests aflame with tropical flowers. The deep valleys do not speak to him of sites for future cities, nor do the lofty crags, piercing the sky, tempt his courageous feet. The wild untamed torrents roar in vain to him—torrents that could be harnessed to a thousand wheels and perform the work of myriad men. Vast potentiality of uninhabited earth, it makes no appeal, neither for the manliness engendered, nor for the liberty that prevails in a country of wide horizons.

When Gambetta cried one day, "Do we not seem to stifle in this old Continent?" he found, perhaps, no answering echo in his compatriots' heart. In any case, the Frenchman is little inclined to seek his fortune abroad; but our

generalizations must not be too wide, for there is a race of Frenchmen—De Brazza, Marchand, Lenfant, Mangin—who are of the real stuff of pioneers. And a hardened class of emigrants exists, particularly in the Auvergne, which has settled in Algeria with success. But this is the exception. The peasant's fidelity to the soil of France is proof, perhaps, that he is well enough at home. Every Jacques has his bit of land, and is not to be disturbed in possession of it by the thought that away yonder, on the other side of the "inland, dolorous sea," exists an estate claiming his energies. He prefers the certain small bird in the hand and the dear home land as a cage to the two brilliant plumaged creatures in the Colonial bush.

The Colonial School, founded to foster amongst other things the Colonial spirit amongst civilians and to teach the Colonist and functionary the arts of the pioneer—woodcraft, agriculture, and the rest—has never made a great appeal to French sentiment. Every annual report bemoans the lack of enthusiasm amongst the rising generation, so few of whom desire to profit by the facilities. Yet, in face of these difficulties, and of their natural reluctance to leave their pleasant land, the French have won their right to the name and place of the second Colonizing Power. Their African possessions are admirably managed; Algeria is a standing credit to French administration, and shows constant industrial and social progress; Indo-China, though a somewhat bigger problem, is by no means discouraging; Madagascar makes progress; and, indeed, in most places where the tricolour flies, there are evidences of good work done in the development of natural resources and in implanting ideas of civilization in the natives.

Algeria is the oldest of the actual colonies, as well as the most important, and has had more than eighty years of



TLEMSEN, CASCADES DE L'OUED MEFROUCH





French rule. Properly, it belongs to Louis Philippe's reign, and one of those whose names figure prominently in the Colonial roll is the Duc d'Aumale, the King's fourth son. The Duke proved himself a dashing cavalry leader, as when, in defiance of staff orders, and with only six hundred troopers, he attacked and routed an army of Algerians three times the number. But, called to the general government, he developed into an able administrator. He had much to do with the settlement of France's Colonial Empire, and his achievements cast a military aureole over the waning popularity of his pacific father. The French excuse for the occupation of Algeria was the piracy of the Algerians. They were constantly interfering with French trade, and were secretly inspired, or so the French thought, by England and Holland. Throughout the pages of French Colonial history you will find many references to the wicked and designing English. We were perpetually at war with France over Colonial questions, and our arms came into conflict with hers at different points on the globe. Her Colonial Empire practically ceased to exist after the Napoleonic wars, and that it was so, was largely due to us and our unceasing activity in checking her colonizing ambitions.

Blood and treasure were poured out in Algeria with unsparing hand. The capture of Constantine, which came near the end of the Orleanist reign, cost the life of a general, and, at every step, young officers perished in ambush or in the open field. It is a rugged, difficult country to fight in; the Arabs are a warlike, intractable race, nor have they ever been attracted to French rule. Even after so many years of domination, they are regarded as an uncertain element, and the proposition to embody them for military defence of the territory has always excited the apprehension of the European settlers.

Algiers, to-day, is being covered with a network of railways, and is showing a remarkable disposition to respond to French capital and intelligence, particularly in mining and agriculture. Many model farms exist in Algeria, and farming operations, as a rule, are carried on intelligently and with the employment of a good working plant. The rising generation of Arabs, too, is attending school, and considerable numbers profit by the opportunities given for education in the elements of knowledge and in the arts and sciences. Civilizing forces are at work with good results. The climate is delightful and the conditions of life generally agreeable, nor, of course, are the inhabitants "black people" as the French themselves have sometimes called them in their ignorance. They are almost the colour and have many of the racial characteristics of a Frenchman of the central plateau. If you came, suddenly, upon a meeting of notables in Algeria, for instance, you might readily suppose that you were in the midst of a company of provincial French, the burnous replacing the blue smock of the peasant or the broadcloth of the townsman. French, too, is spoken freely, all over the country; French laws, manners, and customs have generally established themselves. It is a delightful country, yielding to none in its possibilities for the future.

Morocco, of course, hinges on to Algeria and presents great difficulties by reason of the constant menace of marauders. The border line is ill defined, and the roving tribesmen of the Sultan's inchoate Empire have the greatest difficulty in distinguishing "meum" from "tuum." The Moroccan problem, of course, does not occur in quite the acute form in which it presented itself some five or six years ago, since Europe has given a police mandate to France and Spain, recognizing their superior rights; at the same time, the path to Fez, whether reached diplomatically

or at the bayonet's point, has been proved sufficiently difficult by the Relief Expedition of 1911 to cause the reflective to say, "Trouble ahead." In the cynical mood that sometimes descends upon a Frenchman he will declare, despite the "Entente Cordiale"—that England made no real effort to check France in Northern Africa, because she knew the difficulties that lay in that region and thought that, sooner or later, the task would be renounced. France has not renounced, and continues valiantly to go forward in her work of civilization. General Lyautey's plan, to which I have already alluded, is ingenious and generally successful. When commander-in-chief of the Algerian army, charged with the safety of the colony, he devised a scheme for planting a colony of tame Moors in a sort of neutral country between their own wild tribesmen and the nationals of France. These settled Moors oppose a natural barrier to the nomads, and offer, also, hostages to fortune in their own persons and homesteads.

France has conceived the happy plan of making conquests and maintaining them with the aid of foreigners. Few of her own children have taken part in the "little wars" which, day by day, dog the path of the Empire-builder and consolidate his work. Algeria has been won for France by her Foreign Legion, which is recruited from every country save France, but is officered by Frenchmen. In addition to this Foreign Legion, which has a reputation for devilment—the legionaries are the courageous scallywags of the world, broken in fortune, but brimful of manhood—are bodies of native or semi-native troops. The Zouaves, so named from a warlike tribe with whom they battled in days gone by, were originally composed of Colonists and Arabs, but, to-day, are exclusively French. Then there are the *Tirailleurs Algériens* or *Turcos*, and other bodies mainly composed of native warriors.

We shall have to proceed farther down towards the Equator before we discover the real black man.

What are properly designated native troops belong, more especially, to the other African regions of the French Empire. It is in Western Equatorial Africa that you find a splendid race of coloured fighting men in the Senegalese. In the Colonial enterprises of France in the last fifty years or so they have played a brilliant part. Extraordinarily faithful, endowed with a natural instinct for discipline, and finding, in the constitution of the regiment, the image of their own family and tribal formation, they naturally obey the orders of the military chiefs, in whose wisdom they have a childlike faith. Many are the deeds of heroism performed by these black fellows in their fights against the enemies of France, and cases are on record where regiments have been decimated and not a man dismayed or driven to flight. When the men are killed off, the women take their places, and load and fire the rifles with an astonishing "sang-froid." The Senegalese are always accompanied by their wives and children into battle, and are inseparable from them.

The West African negro transplants well. He was sent to Morocco to aid in the settlement of the Casablanca incident, in which the Moors murdered French workmen. A punitive expedition was the result. The Senegalese exhibited extraordinary powers of endurance, chasing the enemy for miles into the country. Nor did they seem to suffer in health from an absence of warm clothing. Again, in the pacification of Madagascar, after the dethroning of Queen Ranavolla, the black troops earned the praises of General Gallieni, Governor-General and Military Commander of the island. And his encomiums were the more remarked because they did not include the regiments of Arabs, as uncertain in the field as they

are in the other relations of life. One must not forget, however, the valour of the "Turcos," partially composed of Arab elements, who, after the battle of Froeschviller in 1870, marched for days through forests, living upon roots, and finally planted a tattered flag on the walls of Strasburg. If a proud people, the sons of Islam are generally fickle and unstable, whilst the negro is naive, courageous, and steadfast. These military qualities have been recognized by his commanders, and it was on the invitation of Lieutenant-Colonel Mangin, of the Colonial Infantry, that the experiment of recruiting black troops for permanent service abroad was first begun. Always doubtful of the fidelity of the Arab, particularly when taught to use the weapons of his conquerors, the French residents in Algeria experienced a sense of confidence when the first contingent of black troops landed at Algiers. This good opinion of the black man as a body-guard has not, up to the present moment, been belied by reason of a contrary experience.

France is a singularly compact empire. It extends from the English Channel right to the heart of Equatorial Africa, to the once mysterious Timbuctoo itself—and beyond, in an easterly direction. This gives homogeneity to French rule and dominion. Everywhere is her influence felt; everywhere she is leaving her impress on the natives, teaching them the arts of civilization and causing them to abandon their old pagan practices. It is also evident that she has carried with her her own complicated system of taxation and customs. This is particularly seen in Indo-China, where, probably, it is most resented. In their dealings with the yellow race the French are less happy than when in contact with the black. But we discuss this question later on.

In the great Sahara, French enterprise is seen in the



exploitation of the oases. A French company, as well as native proprietors, owns vast plantations of palms. Thanks to the splendid work of French civil and military engineers, the old desert wells, which have been silted up for years, have been re-sunk ; new Artesian wells have been bored, and the desert made to blossom as the rose. The rustling of the wind through the palm trees and the grateful sound of water are heard as the traveller approaches these beauty spots, lying like pearls in the great ocean of sand. In the purple and rose of the dawn, in the glorious freshness of the air blowing straight out of heaven, uncontaminated by earthly influence ; in the soft yielding sand—even in the kiss of the Sirocco, is magic and mystery. A man may ride for months straight towards the sun and never come to an end of this vast region. The strange towns built with stone corridors for shade from the relentless sun ; the weird and fascinating people of the desert ; the blue-veiled Tuaregs, mounted on their richly caparisoned war-camels ; the dancing girls, with their crowns of pendent golden lous, passing from town to town to enliven the cafés with their disconcerting entertainments ; the solemn and dignified chieftains in their splendid robes of ceremony riding gravely out to meet the stranger : these are things to thrill the traveller of romantic impulse in search of new sensations. At present the desert is unspoiled. One is carried to Biskra in the train, Biskra, where is situated the “Garden of Allah”—the Count’s garden known and loved by every reader of Hichens’ entrancing novel. It exists with its groves, its amorous flute-player, its sun-dial, and its hundred enchantments of sunshine and shadow. Biskra is the gateway, the Gibraltar of the French Soudan ; through its massive walls we must pass into the Great Lone Land with its fleet Bedouins, its incomparable sunsets and its calm. Some day commercial people will carry the railway to

Touggourt, deep placed in the wilderness, and now only accessible on horse and mule back, several days' journey from Biskra. And such an extension of modern transportation, displacing the leisurely picturesque caravan, is rendered necessary by the growing industry of the date-palm, which each year becomes more considerable, and represents a greater investment of French and Arab capital.

To the iron road will be added, in the near future, another means of transportation, another symbol of civilization. The aeroplane has been enlisted in the Colonial service. In Madagascar, it is destined to carry mails over the high plateau which separates Tananarive from Fianarantsoa, the great commercial centre of the South. In the great Sahara it sails proudly over the stony desert steppes, an instrument of military domination and an engine of observation, rather than the Mercury of the "Postes." Journeys that on camel-back take weeks and months, the aeroplane accomplishes in hours and days. It is a revolution fraught with immeasurable consequences.

Here is, clearly, the colonizer of the future. In places where the railway cannot penetrate by reason of the marshy character of the soil, or because of other physical difficulties, the aeroplane wings its way along the aerial route, unconscious of terrestrial obstacles and regarded by the natives as a friendly messenger of peace, the benevolent winged herald of the protecting Power. Whilst in war the air-machine has its deadly mission to fulfil in the dropping of bombs and in the reconnaissance of the enemy's forces, in peace time it is the real "bird of freedom," the ensign of a brotherhood linking people to people.

In Madagascar, one of the acknowledged difficulties is the sparseness of the population, thinner than the most thinly peopled department in France. The Hindu does

very well in Madagascar, adapting himself admirably to the mode of life. A proposition was made by one of the Governors-General to invite immigration from British India, but the Home Government never took kindly to the scheme, though an experiment on a limited scale showed that the colonists were just the material wanted. Madagascar makes progress along the right lines, but it is somewhat slow for the very reason of "un manque de bras," as the French phrase is. Without population, obviously, there can be no great development and, for the moment, there seems no likelihood of increase. A proposition, in a sense contrary to the one I have just quoted, would have transported the Malagasy labourer to the mines of South Africa, in place of the Chinese. It is hardly necessary to say that such a project was immediately vetoed by the French authorities.

In Indo-China the problems are acuter than elsewhere, because here the French are face to face with an old civilization and with a people who, if nowadays somewhat decadent and given to opium-smoking, are certainly acutely intelligent. Indo-China, proper, consists of Tonkin, Annam (with Laos), and Cochin China, forming the seaboard of the China Sea and with spheres of influence in Siam and a Protectorate in Cambodia. It was the exploits of a certain Tu-Duc which first called the French to the country. He murdered missionaries and behaved with an astounding disregard of European interests. He was the Emperor of Annam and had an unflattering opinion of the French. In one of his famous edicts to the people he declared that the foreigners barked like dogs and fled like goats. Probably he came afterwards to the conclusion that they bit like dogs and butted like goats. In any case, for a long time he defied the French, and died, I think, without having come into personal contact with

the conquerors. These Tu-Duc incidents occurred before affairs in Tonkin had brought about the downfall of the first great Colonist in France, Jules Ferry—if we except Colbert, Thiers, and Gambetta, whose colonizing instincts had no chance of a practical expression. But, before that, in the days of the Sixteenth Louis, an Annam deputation asked the French to protect the country from its local enemies. Fifty years ago, French and English were jointly concerned in a campaign with the Chinese. This, no doubt, was the beginning of the Far Eastern policy of France and, by enfeebling China, brought on the great struggle between Russia and Japan that terminated in the sanguinary battles of Manchuria. Tonkin, Annam, Siam, Cochin-China are so many stages in a persistent policy to spread French interest in the Indo-Chinese peninsula. The fortunes of war, or rather its misfortunes, have driven France out of India; nothing is left to her of the grandiose ambitions of Dupleix except Pondichery, Chandernagore and three other small towns in which she is forbidden to keep the slightest military force. Chandernagore is curious for its separate laws and extra-territoriality. It has become a sort of Alsatia for criminal characters and has given the Calcutta police a certain amount of trouble. This very fact inspired overtures on the part of the British Government to obtain the cession of the town and territory, but they came to nothing. The mere threat of a bargain of the sort provoked an interpellation in the French Chamber, withdrawn on the assurance of the Minister of Foreign Affairs that no real negotiations had been begun. The fact of a sanctuary may inspire—if one takes a cynical view of human nature—the loyalty of the inhabitants to France. It is claimed that in the French “enclaves” the native lives on better terms with the dominant white man than elsewhere in the great Peninsula. There

is a story of a French Indian, who, brought before an Annam magistrate, proudly declared his nationality in these terms: "We were French a hundred years before you."

In Annam and Cochin China the brotherly love that would seem to prevail between the Hindu and his French rulers is less conspicuous. The petty tyranny of the functionary is constantly referred to in yearly reports, and M. Messimy, Reporter to the Colonial Budget in 1909, lays special stress upon it when talking of the Indo-Chinese provinces. It is recounted that at one official luncheon given by a Governor-General an Annamite militiaman stood behind each guest's chair. Some eighteen or twenty of the same force were enlisted in the service of Monsieur le Gouverneur or of Madame his wife, in the capacity of coachmen and gardeners, cooks, and other domestics. As to the taxes, they are hardly to be borne, and have raised such a feeling of irritation in the breast of the usually mild Annamite that, according to M. Eugène Brioux, the French dramatist, who recently travelled in those parts, he is ready to free himself from the foreign yoke at the first opportunity. His chief complaint is not so much the amount of taxation as the manner of levying it. Life is made insupportable by the multiplicity and complexity of the demands; stamps for this document and that, taxes on rice, taxes on salt and alcohol and opium, and everything for which the Oriental has an unholy appetite. "Fonctionnaires" are disdainful, and, worse still, their name is legion. Unlike the population at home, they increase and multiply. The French look covetously upon the English system of a few functionaries well paid; their system is exactly the opposite: a vast number insufficiently remunerated. Scandal of various sorts is the result, though it is possible that the abuses of power, related in the newspapers, lose nothing



in the telling, our Frenchman taking an odd pleasure in writing himself down as black as possible.

One of the most unfortunate systems is the salt "*régie*," which has resulted in closing numbers of saline works simply because it became unprofitable to continue. The alcohol monopoly appears, also, to have given rise to abuse; the sale of opium continues to be a potent cause of degradation, and raises the continual protest of the reformer at home. M. Messimy's remedy is to put a prohibitive tax on the drug so that none but the rich can buy. He rather naively adds that this will affect the Chinese, in whom France has no particular interest. But if only "the happy few" are to be allowed opium, why continue the sale at all? Is not its suppression better? It is admittedly hard to stamp out the custom. In one district where the experiment was tried, and where, theoretically, not an ounce of opium was sold, the mandarins and others addicted to it exhibited none of the distressing symptoms which a sudden deprivation of the drug entails. By circuitous and thoroughly Oriental means they had managed to obtain the poison. But its effects, morally and physically, are deplorable upon the white as well as the yellow man. France, itself, has reason to know this, for the habit has made great inroads in her Colonial army. Periodically opium dens are closed at Toulon and in other ports in contact with the East. Indo-China is the least flourishing of the French possessions simply because, there, the peculiar defects of the over-centralized French system have been given the greatest opportunities to manifest themselves. And, again, the population is of the temperament to resent the peculiarly irritating red-tape methods of the French people. Nevertheless, France, having lost India, tries to satisfy her wounded pride with territory equal in size to thirty French departments.

Though the presence of the multitudinous functionary complicates matters by estranging the native, France is clever enough to fête the potentate, who, from time to time, visits Paris. Sisowath, the merry monarch of Cambodia, brought to the French capital his famous corps of ballet dancers, and was handsomely entertained. He took so kindly to the pleasures of Lutetia that he was with difficulty constrained to return to the comparatively quiet joys of Pnom-Penh.

Ferry's downfall was directly to be attributed to the reverse at Langson in the famous Tonkin campaign of 1884-5. It was particularly unfortunate for the politician, who anticipated a crowning result of his long labours for the Colonial Empire, and would undoubtedly have succeeded had the war been allowed to take its course. But the French public had become nervous and restless, and, acting with habitual ingratitude, dismissed the faithful servant from office with the added injury of insult. As the fallen Minister drove from the Chamber, in his carriage, after the debate on the retreat of Langson, the mob attempted to throw him into the Seine. On that, as on other occasions in his tormented political career—he was, probably, the most unpopular man in the Republic—he preserved the sang-froid and dignity which earned for him the title of “the Gentleman of the Parisian Democracy.” At that very time, he was about to obtain from China a treaty of peace recognizing the French Protectorate over Tonkin and Annam.

The modern Apostle of Greater France is M. Etienne, Vice-President of the Chamber and one of the deputies for Oran, the Southern province of Algeria. M. Etienne has made a speciality of Colonial matters, founding his work on that of Mr. Chamberlain. The French politician has also asked his countrymen to “think Imperially,” and has, to



PALMS AT BENI-OUNIF, ALGERIA



some extent, succeeded. If there is no flow of immigration to France overseas, there is a distinct interest in the Colonies. In this, the Press has helped. The "Matin" patriotically waves the flag when some daring officer crosses mountains, hitherto regarded as inaccessible, opens a fresh route across the desert, discovers water-courses, or brings new light to bear upon undeveloped provinces. "La Dépêche Coloniale" likewise performs a very useful work in popularizing Colonial subjects. The day may come when the "Ecole des Fonctionnaires" suggested by M. Augagneur, ex-Governor of Madagascar, materializes; in the meantime, the Office Colonial, the most interesting enterprise founded by M. Etienne in his Colonial schemes, has received a reinforcement of officials. Alas, that every reform in France is accompanied by an addition to the plethoric ranks of the functionary!

The Office Colonial in the Palais Royal is at once a museum, a library, and a bureau of information. It is much frequented by young and ambitious natives of the French dominions, who hanker after official appointments. Perhaps the incorporation of the educated native in some administrative capacity is the solution of French government abroad. None of the colonies has autonomy at present. No one thinks of applying it to Algeria. Though the country is well settled and the Arabs wear the look of contentment—as much as the sons of Islam can look contented under the foreign yoke—there is no serious suggestion, even, of sending sixty deputies in bur-nous to the Chamber. The Negro states of Middle Africa are not, of course, sufficiently advanced for self-government; but, when you deal with the yellow man, you have a different material, much more malleable, much more susceptible of imitation; and it is likely enough that the Tonkinois and Annamites will, before long, have their



Parliaments. But this is advancing matters. Before that day arrives they will have ceased, perhaps, to be French "protégés" to become—who knows? Japanese. Hereby we are reminded that a foreign policy is necessary in relation to Indo-China, whereas it does not exist in the African domain of France. The reason is that the Yellow Danger has always been associated with this strip of Yellow Cosmos. Where there is the yellow man, there is the Yellow Danger—according to the learned Asiatic students of the Sorbonne. And Japan is always the bugbear.

It was said that the victors of the Russians were only waiting their time to seize the territories of Indo-China, after having annexed the kingdom of Mahu Vagiranudh, where, indeed, their influence is powerful and, probably, paramount to-day. For long, I say, the French were haunted with this idea of Japanese absorption. It only ceased, or became sensibly less on the day that France signed a convention with the extraordinary little people, who have astonished Europe with their military prowess and assimilative energy. Nor had the French any particular reason for thinking the Siamese loved them. The bombardment of Bangkok is remembered against them, and, for many a year, the brusque methods of French sailors, whilst a tribute to Occidental determination, did not recommend themselves to these gentle, scheming, dark-skinned people. That is one of the reasons why the French are scarcely loved in the peninsula that stretches into the China Sea. Another is the oppression of the officials and the horrid incubus of taxation. Taxes have increased woe-fully, and every financial reform has cast more upon the shoulders of the native, in some form of impost, direct or indirect, giving a corresponding relief to the home taxpayer. The latter, poor man, finds the advantage more apparent than real, for he is saddled with the expensive

luxury of social legislation and experiments in nationalization with an army of salaried deputies, and deputies' favourites—likewise salaried. Politics is the chief French industry in some French colonies, and, however barren the soil and microscopical the commerce, ambition flourishes.

Part of the Yellow Danger, momentarily allayed by an understanding with the Land of the Chrysanthemum, resides in the fear that China may some day awake, and, in throwing off the lethargy of centuries, revert to her old power and influence. Symptoms of a military activity in the Southern Provinces of the Celestial Empire disquiet French administrators. On the day when the Dragon issues from its Cave of Slumber, there will be trepidation in this far-off possession of France. These are problems enough to make the annual reports of Parliamentary Committees interesting reading.

France still maintains her penal settlements abroad. Cayenne has an unenviable reputation on this account. On Devil's Island, Dreyfus was shut up in his terrible cage. And New Caledonia serves an equally lugubrious purpose in removing, for more or less long periods, from their native soil the desperadoes of Paris and the Provinces. Some part of the criminal activity of her great towns France employs, wisely, in fighting her country's battles. The energy of the bad man, if directed into wise paths, becomes a source of national force and aggrandizement. The Apache, who sins, perhaps, because life in its ordinary aspect is too dull for him, can, under discipline, become a worthy son of La Patrie. "Les Bat' d'Af," as they are called—the special disciplinary companies in Northern Africa—have performed many a gallant service for the Colonial Empire and added gems to the Imperial crown. In Guyana and New Caledonia, however, the evil spirits of the convicts are not let off in road-making or in brushes with marauders, but are turned to the

commonplace and monotonous round of a Penal Settlement. Yet, romance comes, sometimes, to break the dull level of existence. A convict escapes and, 'midst hair-breadth perils, obtains his liberty in the adjacent English or Dutch settlements.

St. Pierre and Miquelon are all that remain of the old French dominance in Canada. The sturdy sea-farers of these islands find a precarious existence still more precarious since France has sacrificed her fishing rights on the French shore of Newfoundland on the altar of the *Entente Cordiale*. Bretons by origin, the inhabitants of these islands take to the water as the duck; but, life is hard on their islands and the attraction of Canada, with its boundless resources, too great to be resisted. Hence, the future of the islands gives some anxiety to those concerned in the growth of Greater France. La Réunion, Martinique and Guadeloupe have, also, their place on the map of French political influence. La Martinique, unfortunately, has suffered grievously by reason of seismic convulsion and the last eruption of Mont Pélée smothered by its sulphurous fumes many thousands of inhabitants. Nor did the funds collected for the sufferers answer to the full their avowed purpose. If the first relief was organized promptly and effectively, the more substantial dole that followed seems to have gone into the wrong pockets, and to have fed official rapacity rather than a famished population. In these respects, the Colonies do not provide the only examples of misdirection of supplies. Even in the distribution of funds for the victims of the Seine Floods, the suggestion has been made—with some show of truth—that the money fell, chiefly, to political supporters of the Government and left little to necessitous opponents. Allegations of the sort are the inevitable consequence of a democracy, which must broad-base itself on material interests and pay its followers in a coin they understand.

Every functionary is by the nature of his employment and the circumstances of his office a supporter of the régime, though even he, as we saw in the memorable Postal Strike in Paris in the winter of 1908, may be temporarily seduced from his allegiance by a Socialist and Revolutionary propaganda.

The French language persists in Lower Canada in a manner that surprises an Englishman, who visits the Dominion for the first time. I confess to being astonished at hearing the "Petite Tonkinoise" whistled and sung by a youth in one of the smaller wooden townships on the Saguenay River, part of the picturesque Hinterland of the great Hudson Bay Territory. Yet, it would be a mistake to suppose, as some Parisian papers are fond of doing, that the French Canadian looks to France as his Fatherland or to the Third Republic as representing his ideal of government. Nothing of the sort. To him, the administration that broke up the brotherhoods and nunneries of the Roman Church is detestably atheistical. On Fête days, in Canada, there is practically no sign of the Tricolor; when he flies the French Flag at all, the Canadian insists that it shall be white: symbol of Monarchical and Clerical France. And his language, as we know, is the French of the Seventeenth Century, of the *Roi Soleil*: an arsenal of old expressions, which provoke the smile of the Boulevardier, when he encounters them for the first time. Yet, if there is very little sympathy expressed by the Catholic Canadian for the Republic, there is a sufficiently close connection and a sentimental wish, at least in Paris, to draw near to opinion in Quebec and Montreal, if not to get solid advantages from Ottawa by reason of the linguistic and racial connection. Canada's first treaty, as a sovereign nation, was made with France and has sent more goods to the St. Lawrence as well as more Canadian produce to Brest and

Havre. It is rather in the development of commercial relations that the association of France with Canada in the future lies. The French are the first to realize that the conservatism of the Lower Province of Quebec, which maintains the old French language, laws and customs, is out of spirit with the modern requirements of a growing Empire. Hence, as Canada becomes greater and her farming lands are taken up by the English-speaking races, she becomes less under the influence of the old Clerical dominance, which still persists, to an amazing extent, in that picturesque citadel named "the Gibraltar of the New World." The glowing pages of Sir Gilbert Parker's "Seats of the Mighty" recall the day when French and English struggled for the mastery and when, on the Heights of Abraham—recently the scene of the gorgeous pageant commemorating the discovery of the St. Lawrence by Sebastian Cabot—Wolfe met Montcalm and found, on the summit of the craggy cliffs, that path of glory which led to his own grave, whilst establishing, for ever, the pre-eminence of his countrymen in Northern America.

The loss of Canada was a bitter pill to the French, notwithstanding the famous allusion to "*quelques arpents de neige*." Louisiana became French, precisely owing to the French occupation of Canada. Southwards a missionary travelled and planted the flag of the Fourteenth Louis on the shores of the Mississippi. Here, again, the watchful English came into conflict with their old rivals, and battles were waged and forts were raised to protect the route to the new territory. Fort Duquesne marks the site of a battle and establishes the memory of a man who did what he could to assert the French right to be where they were.

Her extraordinarily agitated history during the first sixty years of the last century, caused France to relax her hold upon Louisiana. But the territory was recovered from



Spain and, finally, sold to the United States. Traces of the old French culture and language still persist, and New Orleans is a quaint survival of a French town, planted in the midst of a bustling American people.

The conflict with Germany, forty years ago, caused a loosening of the bonds of Empire in Algeria and awoke the spirit of Mussulman revolt, which was quenched by French energy. Elsewhere on the globe, French aspirations towards Colonial grandeur have been thwarted or minimized by her own internal difficulties. Sometimes, the native agitator has profited by the circumstance to raise a rebellion; sometimes, as at the end of the Napoleonic wars, the enemies and victors of France in Europe have dictated terms of peace, which have left her practically nothing, but the memory of her former possessions. It speaks well for the resilience and the recuperative powers of this country that, in less than a hundred years, she should have again acquired, at the cost of vast effort and no little monetary expenditure, such desirable portions of the earth as are represented in her African colonies, in Madagascar, and in Indo-China.

The growth and prosperity of her West African possessions—Senegal, Guinea, Dahomey and the Ivory Coast—are most significant and lend justification to the remark of M. Etienne to the writer that even England could learn something from their administration. Central Africa will be knit more closely to the capital by reason of the employment of the black in garrisoning Algeria and Tunis. France has rapidly acquired knowledge of the colonial "métier," and her Empire to-day is eloquent of the devotion of her sons, just as it bears witness to a new and gratifying continuity of policy on lines laid down by M. Hanotaux and other Ministers.

## CHAPTER XIII

### FRENCH HISTORY IN GOTHIC

**H**ISTORY of no common sort is associated with French Gothic. It is enshrined, particularly, in the three glorious cathedrals of Notre Dame de Paris, of Chartres, and of Rheims. Art and life are inextricably bound. Who can look upon the splendid cathedral of Paris without thinking of its past, which included the self-crowning of an Emperor and the enthroning of a goddess of reason; upon Chartres, with its brilliant and unexpected episode in the "conversion" of the Huguenotic king; upon Rheims, with its Sainted Maid unfurling her oriflamme of victory, and the long glittering line of kings extending from Philip Augustus in 1180 to Charles X in 1824?

The old province of the Ile de France, which encloses Paris, is not only the cradle of French civilization and where its greatest drama has been played, but contains an astonishing galaxy of churches. What Athens was to Greek art, Constantinople to Byzantine, and Florence to Renaissance, this district of France is to Gothic architecture. Within a short distance of each other—in the Ile de France, in La Beauce, Normandy, and the Orleanais—are to be found cathedrals of surpassing splendour. Beautiful as the Romanesque churches are in the South, none is equal to the series of the North: Amiens, Rouen, Chartres, Beauvais, Rheims, and Paris. Here is reached



JOAN OF ARC AT THE CROWNING OF CHARLES VII AT RHEIMS  
FROM THE FRESCO BY LENEPVEU IN THE PANTHÉON, PARIS



the culminating point in art and science, which distinguishes the Gothic architecture from any other. Elsewhere, Byzantine or Grecian influences prevail. Brittany is as Provincial as Cornwall; Auvergne and Provence adhere to the classical. This is less the case in Anjou and still less in Normandy; but, within a certain radius of Paris, are to be found the choicest treasures of the Gothic builder of the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries. The origin of Gothic is a large question, which I do not propose to discuss to any extent. But whether it sprang from the East or from the debris of Roman construction, whether it was Persian or Egyptian in its earliest manifestations, or due to a French king's wanderings in Italy, in France, at all events, it reached its highest development, its most superb expression.

It seems apparent that England received the Gothic by way of Normandy, but the manner of its development, whether it was independent and insular, or, largely, Continental, is, again, subject to controversy. One authority tells us that no English work led up to Westminster Abbey, just as nothing in Germany foreshadowed Cologne Cathedral; on the other hand, there are those who insist that English Gothic antedated the French, in its leading features, by fifty years. However that may be, the two countries display differing characteristics in their architecture: the French clinging to the apse or "chevet," which is one of their glories, the English preferring the square end to the chancel. Another difference is found in the tendency of the English builder to build low and of the French to build high. The height of the French nave is extraordinary, and occasionally overleaped itself, as at Beauvais, where the roof collapsed twelve years after construction. In England, the architect had more sober ideas, and was always restrained by a nice realization of the



effects of thrust and strain. If the manifestations of the Gothic were never as brilliant as in France, their quenching was less complete. The fire continued to smoulder for a long time, whilst, in France, we find only cold ashes. "In England, Gothic art," said Mr. Edward Prior, "never grew to be a mere mechanism of construction. It always retained a soul, a humour that was hearty in its devotion, though finally, it became Bourgeois in its expression." It was the logic of the Parisians that brought to the Gothic both its extreme excellence and its decay. The roof, the keynote of the Gothic, soared and soared until it fell.

With this "vaulting ambition" was joined "a growing complexity of poise and counterpoise and thrust and strain. Material mass seemed to disappear. Cathedrals were chainworks of articulated stone nailed to the ground by pinnacles." French art went mad, but the cooler Briton kept his head.

French architects aimed at greater height and greater size, but there was not the same effect of length as in the English cathedrals. The roof of the nave was so lofty that it was not possible to build a steeple which should have the effect that steeples have in England. "English cathedrals more resemble a sailing-ship," says Mr. O. E. Bodington (who has a knowledge of cathedral architecture possessed by few amateurs), "with clusters of slender towers like masts, and low-pitched naves, not usually more than one hundred feet high, from which the numerous towers stand out markedly. These towers are about twice the height of the nave. The average pitch of the nave in French cathedrals is two hundred feet; hence, the towers, which are not much higher than English towers, look as stubbly as the funnel of a warship." This is particularly the case at Amiens, where the turret is nearly as high as Salisbury's spire, but has a squat appearance,

for the reasons just stated. The word "nave," is derived from "nef," "navis," a vessel. From this analogy, one might say that French-Gothic cathedrals are the Dreadnoughts of Church architecture.

Though more majestic in their proportions, it is doubtful if these French cathedrals were as complete in all their parts as the English. Yet it is difficult to overpraise them. Exquisite art and skill were lavished on the ground plan; boldness and lightness of touch were combined in the construction, and vigorous is the beauty of the sculpture—features which distinguish these glorious specimens of the French-Gothic from any other churches in the world. The style is singularly adapted, by its solemnity and simplicity, to temples of the Christian God. In contemplating these gorgeous fanes, one is reminded that the impenetrable recesses of the forest where were celebrated the sacred rites and mysteries of the Druids, were Nature's first cathedrals. The Gothic seems to have founded itself upon Nature's most beautiful and impressive scene: the overarching branches of lofty trees.

Flamboyancy was the undoing of the fourteenth-century architect. The Golden Age of architecture had passed, and, in its place, was a gay and meretricious thing depending upon ornament for its chief effect, and disregarding the sincerity and devotion which earlier architects had brought to bear upon their work. Church-building and decoration became a matter of adroitness and skill rather than of religious and artistic conviction, and the French, having distinguished themselves more vividly in the one direction, fell more deeply into the opposite extreme. Strange to say, architects and artisans performed better work when their efforts were anonymous; directly their names became known, their labour seems to show a want of the highest feeling, a falling off from the highest attainment.

Chartres, masculine, sturdy and grandiose, is in many respects the most splendid of the group which includes Amiens, Bourges, Rheims, Laon, Caen, Troyes, Le Mans, and a number of others, which are only slightly inferior. It stands in the great plain of La Beauce, a plain which waves with corn in the harvest months. "Le blé, c'est la Beauce et la Beauce c'est Chartres." This communion between the great cathedral and the swimming wheat-fields is seen in one of the painted windows in the clerestory of the nave, dedicated to the tilling of the soil. Like a lion couchant, this colossal fabric dominates the landscape, as one arrives by the road from Dreux.

Chartres is in every sense the type of Gothic cathedral. It is a church to pray in, it has been declared. Nowhere is such comfort to be attained by the spiritually-minded, nowhere are orisons more fervent. Sombre and mysterious, seeming to enclose the deeper sides of life, it mingles, as Mr. Cecil Headlam says, "pagan-Stoic with the comforting tidings of the Christian saints and martyrs, combining, that is, the Romanesque and Gothic styles: the rounded and the pointed arch, taking the best of them and uniting them in a transition." Everywhere, indeed, in this wonderful building, are signs of the Transition. You can see the Gothic emerging from the Romanesque. The mason is here experimenting, developing fresh ideas, tending towards spring and lightness. And he leaves the old, horizontal lines and strives to attain airiness and grace. He has not yet sufficient confidence in his rib-vaulting—as counteracting the outward thrust of the massive Romanesque roof—and so he employs flying buttresses, which are heavy affairs with only slight decoration. For the same reason, figures of the saints are slight and shallow. Yet, there are many evidences of the elegance of Early Gothic decoration, wherever it does not interfere with the

supposed architectural necessities. Elsewhere, the Transitional artist is a daring soul, almost impudent in his flights towards Heaven; but here, at Chartres, he is restrained by feelings of structural expediency. He knows he has to deal with solid mass, rigid and unpliant, whereas sometimes, as at Amiens, he seems to treat stone as steel; the result is a marvellous union of fancy with achievement. Mr. Headlam, in a happy comparison between Chartres and Amiens, says: "Amiens is light and joyous, Chartres is mysterious and sad. Amiens rises as naturally as sparks fly upward, as thoroughly as the flute-like notes of a treble voice, as careless as a child's light laughter."

The whole of medieval theology finds its symbolism in the cathedral, in its wonderful carving, in its still more wondrous stained glass. If we are conscious of the mystery and suggestiveness of Chartres, we do not necessarily find Notre Dame de Paris "a corpse of stone," though we feel as Huysmans did, the absence of religious sentiment at Amiens, "with its colourless windows, letting in the crude daylight, and its fenced side-chapels, little conducive to prayer and meditation." Yet our sensitiveness is not, perhaps, shocked by the deadness of Laon. Assuredly, at Chartres, however, there broods the spirit of peace and piety as nowhere else in the cathedral land of France.

The jewelled windows of Canterbury and Lincoln, Salisbury and York dazzle with beauty, but here, at Chartres, as indeed at Rheims, Le Mans and Bourges, the effect is finer because of the greater quantity of glass. The larger proportion of the one hundred and seventy-five lights are thirteenth-century in their origin; the three Western windows are even earlier. Many will think the exterior, grandiose as it is with its immense steeple and richly carved portals, inferior in absolute beauty to the sublime interior,

with its arches and columns, impeccable in their noble simplicity!

Chords have been struck and have died away at Chartres; but through the flash of centuries, the cathedral has remained, mystic symbol of the undying faith, a focus of religion, a shrine for pilgrimage. Henry V of England, recognized as Regent and Heir to the throne of France, paid homage, as pilgrim, to the sanctity of the fane, and his soldiery gave rich gifts. It was only under Charles VIII that Chartres was won—by strategy—from the Anglo-Saxon.

The oldest part of the church, as well as the most impressive, is the crypt. When the church above was burnt in the eleventh century, the crypt remained intact, sheltering in its ghostly shadow the Black Madonna, Notre Dame de Sous Terre. And when the glorious superstructure rose again, peasants and pilgrims harnessed themselves to the work, dragging pieces of timber and yoking themselves to carts. Part of the simplicity and dignity of the towers, one of which is quite late in construction, having been rebuilt in the fifteenth century, is due to the employment of huge blocks of stone, quite contrary to Gothic precedent.

The cathedral is dedicated to the Virgin, and tradition says it was built above a grotto where, in old times, the Druids worshipped a Maiden who should bear a son. "Virgini parituræ" was the dedication of the wooden statue in the mysterious sanctuary hidden in the depths of the forest. These rites and ceremonies are strangely prophetic of the destinies of the great cathedral that was to be. White-robed processions of priests wound their way through the trees to the sacred grove where stood the statue of the Virgin. One carried bread, another a vase of water, a third an ivory hand, emblematical of Justice. And when they came to the sacred oak, whereon grew the mistletoe—sign





ROOD SCREEN AT CHARTRES



of Divine favour—the High Priest advanced and, with his golden hook, struck off the plant, which was caught in a white mantle. Then victims were slain and gifts distributed. There is a story that King Prius, fifty years before the coming of the Romans, carried the body of his dead son on horseback, and laid it before the statue. Miraculously the lad came to life.

The two great spires outstand, as I have said, in a country that is singularly flat and uninteresting, which affects one, as an ocean does, with moods of melancholy. Of the two Madonnas which give special sanctity to the place, one, Our Lady of the Pillar, is set up in the nave, and the other, Our Lady of the Crypt, presides over the dim, vast, subterranean chapel which is, to-day, the most famous and frequented shrine in the world. Sisters of Mercy, in their religious garb, peasant women, their seamed faces crowned with white caps, little children, hushing their laughter for a while, as they feel the influence of the “milieu,” gather in the recesses of the cathedral and pay veneration to the two statues of the Sovereign Lady.

Chartres exhales history from every pore. Here was crowned Henri Quatre, the Huguenotic King, after he had renounced his Calvinistic “errors.” The Sacred Oil of Rheims was not available for the ceremony for the good reason that the city of Champagne was in the hands of the English. The Catholic Church, however, was equal to the difficulty. There was another precious phial in possession of the monks of Marmoutiers, and Henri arranged that it should be brought, under strong escort, to Chartres, where it was met by the King’s deputy, the Bishop of Angers, and a numerous suite of gentlemen-at-arms.

Henri de Navarre’s conversion was an act of high political wisdom. The country was rent in twain by internal quarrels, and Henri, in adopting the religion of the majority

of his subjects, put an end to civil war and established himself King of France, in reality as well as in name. When, after a stubborn siege, the victorious King entered the town, under a magnificent canopy of blue velvet, fringed with gold and silver and supported by four aldermen, he was awaited at the western porch of the Cathedral by the Bishop and his clergy, who were eager to present an address of loyalty. The King, however, rode on, disregarding their presence. But the prelate, with his surpliced priests, cut through the Cathedral and reappeared at the north door, intercepting the Sovereign, who now listened, good-naturedly, to episcopal oratory.

The pealing of bells and the blaring of trumpets, resounding through streets hung with tapestry, welcomed the procession of monks carrying the sacred phial. Lords spiritual and temporal, officers and magistrates, filled the body of the fane, which the King entered in a camisole of crimson satin drawn over a long robe of silver cloth. Accompanying him to the Cathedral was a splendid escort, composed of two bishops and the parochial clergy, Archers of the Grand Provost, Swiss and Scots Guards, Heralds, Knights of the Holy Spirit, and the Maréchal de Matignon, Constable of France, bearing his sword of office.

The King was anointed by the Bishop of Chartres, who gave him the Kiss of Peace. Then, with one accord, the congregation shouted : "Vive le Roi." Immediately there arose, echoing beneath the vaulted roof, sounds of trumpets, of clarinet and hautbois, and the rolling of drums.

Impressiveness is the dominant note of Chartres ; no other cathedral possesses it to a like degree. This sense of dignity springs from the splendour of its lines, as well as the massiveness and character of construction. The miraculous images of the Virgin appeal with tremendous power to the Faithful, not lessened by the fact that in the

Treasury reposes a tunic said to have belonged to the Mother of Jesus. And the windows are glorious as no others. Man's genius collected the concentrated rays of light, condensed them into rose windows, and then, as we are told, poured them into his avenues of white shafts. Huysmans, in his poetic description of the interior, says : " Even in the darkest weather, the glass is splendid, catching the least rays of sunset, dressing Christ and the Virgin in the most fabulous magnificence, and almost realizing on earth the only attire that seems to befit the glorified body : a robe of flame."

In matter of history, Rheims no doubt takes precedence of Chartres. Here have been crowned the Kings of France since the days of Louis le Débonnaire. None has failed to receive his consecration here, save Hugh Capet, who was crowned at Noyon, Henri Quatre at Chartres, and Napoleon in Paris : Louis XVIII, Louis-Philippe and the Third Napoleon were not crowned at all.

The most brilliant memory of Rheims is the coronation of Charles VII, brought about by the Maid of Orleans. It is one of the most touching scenes on record. Before the High Altar and near the King, La Pucelle stood, banner in hand, watching the ceremony, which represented the fulfilment of her dreams. Then, kneeling before the gentle monarch, she asked, with tears in her eyes, to be allowed to return to her flocks, her mission being accomplished. The presence of the Sacred Ampulla in the Treasury of the church had much to do with the selection of Rheims as the place of coronation. The special sanctity of the Ampulla was derived from Heaven itself. When Saint Remy was baptizing Clovis, the Frankish conqueror, one Christmas day, in sign of his adoption of the Christian Faith, there appeared a dove bearing in its mouth the Holy Phial. That is the story. The relic was broken to pieces



in the Revolution of 1789, when much other damage was done in the church, but it reappeared, either miraculously or by human hands—just as one regards it—in time for the coronation of Charles X, the last of the Kings of France to receive anointment there.

Rheims has the masculine touch proper to the crowning place of kings. There is a bold profusion of deep, massive decoration; statues, single or in groups, of Apostles and Kings, mingle with the figures of beasts. The only feminine touch is a fourteenth-century Virgin, cut into the "trumeau" of the main door. It is a youthful Virgin, almost girlish in her appearance, and she is smiling with a broad humanity at her Babe. This is part of the decoration of that wonderful western façade that Ferguson pronounced the most beautiful piece of work of the Middle Ages. The exquisite portals are like illustrated editions of the Bible, and of the secular history of France. The Beau Dieu or Christ, in the attitude of Benediction, is a wondrous piece of carving.

Had the original architects had their way, seven towers and spires would have dominated the roof; but such features are not necessary to stimulate our admiration of this stupendous edifice, representing the grandest period of the Gothic. The Revolution, doubtless, has robbed us of much that was architecturally fine in France, but we grudge here, more than anywhere, the stained-glass windows which should have illuminated the aisles. Instead, the daylight comes crudely through without any softening medium. And yet the Iconoclasts have spared the glorious rose window and the radiant luminosity of the clerestory. Certainly, the grandeur and grace of the monument are best seen in the west front, with its majestic portals deeply cut, with its surmounting rose window, and the richly bedizened gallery connecting tower with tower, that, with



RHEIMS CATHEDRAL: WEST FRONT



astonishing airiness, puts the finishing touch to the composition. These colossal statues, looking out from their niches, speak with living tongues of old-time incident and stories that have made the world tremble, of victories for the Faith, won by Crusading zeal at a time when the Church was truly militant. Clovis appears in the middle of the Kings of France; and Saul and Solomon, David and Goliath, Christ in the guise of a pilgrim, look down upon us from their canopies of stone set like jewels in this dazzling filigree of Gothic. Reminders of the storied past are present, otherwise, in the Treasury with its gorgeous vestments and symbols of kingly power.

The statue of Joan of Arc reigns in the Cathedral nowadays—scene of her former triumphs—and there are curious old tapestries that recall her times. To most Anglo-Saxons, Rheims speaks of the Jackdaw and the Prelate's Ring of the "Ingoldsby Legends":—

"The Jackdaw sat on the Cardinal's chair!  
Bishop, and Abbot, and Prior were there;  
Many a Monk, and many a Friar,  
Many a Knight, and many a Squire,  
With a great many more of lesser degree—  
In sooth a goodly company."

The Cardinal Lord Archbishop of Rheims is, no doubt, still a noble figure to be "read of in books and dreamed of in dreams," but alas! the Jackdaw no longer sits on his chair. Probably that wily bird is content to look upon the features, in effigy, of the Prelate which appear on the north portal, or to spend his time watching for the man to look from the trap-door, when the great clock strikes in the North Transept—the hale and hearty ancestor of the great timepieces of the world. No doubt, also, the present ruler of the diocese would be too well-bred to curse if his Pastoral Ring were missing one day. The jackdaw of

the legend certainly deserves a place amongst the statuary; sharp eyes might perhaps discover some likeness to him in the five hundred or so figures in the recessed doorways, either in his bald, dishevelled state, or as fat and unctuous when, having received absolution and given up thieving, he becomes a real pillar of the Church, and dies, unquestionably, in the odour of sanctity.

If Rheims is masculine, Amiens is feminine. It has, also, its Virgin Mother, a statue almost as touching as that at Rheims, on the pier of the door in the south transept. Amiens is like a jewel casket. The decorative work is more delicate than at Rheims, or, indeed, anywhere else. To my mind, it is the absolute perfection of Gothic. In a sense, it is the most successful example of what Gothic wished to achieve: the complete effacement of architectural means whereby the maximum of height, light and space is attained with the minimum of apparent effort. If Amiens were a steel frame building one could understand its marvellous balance. Being a stone building, its airiness, without any suggestion of flimsiness, makes us gasp. It is curious that, although built about the same time as Salisbury, in the earlier part of the thirteenth century, it is more mature in style than the great English cathedral. England cannot show the like of these gorgeous rose windows, a hundred feet in circumference. And yet the uncoloured light that beats in relentlessly elsewhere in the building, and the cold railings to the chapels which surround the choir, have chilled some observers of poetic feeling and have given them the sensation that here is no place for prayer. Ruskin, however, had other impressions.

The First Pointed of Normandy has, perhaps, its most picturesque expression in Rouen Cathedral; but diversity and irregularity of construction, as exemplified in the





THE CATHEDRAL AT AMIENS  
FROM THE WATER-COLOUR BY J. F. RAFFAELLI



strikingly dissimilar towers—which are dignified enough in their bold prominence from the ends of the aisles—prevent it from being considered of the best type, the peer of Amiens, Bourges, Chartres and Rheims. Notwithstanding this reservation, there is no great northern temple possessing so many points of value and beauty. Bewilderingly interesting it certainly is, as an example of Flamboyant Gothic, which, in its way, reaches an extraordinary degree of perfection.

Notre Dame de Paris makes, somehow, a quite different appeal. As a piece of architecture it is wonderful, and, in some senses, second to none in the world. And yet its prestige, to-day, owes more to the rhetoric of Hugo and the ebb and flow of history than to its intrinsic workmanship. Here Napoleon seized the crown from the hands of Pope Pius VII and placed it on his own head, in the famous ceremony which made him Emperor with the blessing of the Church. Only a few years previously, the Christian religion had come back again to France, and its return was celebrated by a gorgeous Easter Mass. Before that was the Festival of the Goddess. Madame Moreno, a printer's wife, was seated on the High Altar, and repaid the devotion of her worshippers with a kiss. The dripping torches, the shouts of the rabble, the irreverent pantomime of the service, and the wild, surging revolutionary mobs outside must have contrasted strangely with the glittering picture in which Napoleon, with the aid of the Marquis de Ségur, tried to reconstitute one of the coronation scenes of the old Kings of France. At the critical moment, he seized the crown—a gesture singularly illustrative of his own career. A million and a quarter francs were expended in coronation robes for Emperor and Empress, and another million in crowns and tiaras. A splendid figure the Corsican looked with his coat of red

velvet, embroidered with gold. About his shoulders hung a short cloak, sown with bees, and from his neck was suspended the ribbon of the Legion of Honour studded with diamonds. At the last moment, before leaving the Archbishop's Palace for the cathedral, he assumed a long robe of purple velvet, trimmed with ermine. In the pom-mel of Charlemagne's sword, which had been brought to Paris for the occasion, flashed the Pitt Diamond, which had now fallen to the Dictator, after having enhanced the family fortunes of the British statesman.

Josephine's robe of white satin, trimmed with gold and silver, and embroidered with golden bees, singularly became a woman who was radiantly happy. Her fears were momentarily lulled ; she knew that Napoleon, in his upward flight, could not discard her before, at least, a decent interval had elapsed after the ceremony of the Coronation. She found material security, therefore, as well as food for her pride—always present in the Creole—in her position of Empress. The onlookers were fascinated by her charm and grace. Her waist and shoulders glittered with diamonds ; upon her brow sat a diadem of the finest stones, representing untold wealth. One thinks instinctively of the necklace that adorned the throat of Marie Antoinette, the last of the great line of Queens—that fatal necklace that shattered her own reputation and brought to ruin the House of Bourbon. It had not cost half the money of the circlet that shone from the forehead of Josephine de Beauharnais.

The thoughts of many beholders, no doubt, took a reminiscent turn. They imagined Napoleon sailing up the Seine, as a young student about to attend the classes of the *Ecole Militaire*, and landing for the first time at the steps close to the great Cathedral, where he was to receive the highest consecration of his career. This "symphony in

stone," as Hugo describes it, played a large part in the Napoleonic drama; it was here that the Parvenu celebrated his marriage with Marie Louise, after he had divorced Josephine.

No church has suffered more severely from the malady of restoration; no church has been equally the butt of Revolutionary Vandals. In its uncoloured grandeur the interior still presents a magnificent example of the Early Gothic, though the Sans-Culottes wreaked their insane vengeance upon the tombs and sepulchral monuments. The happiest restorer of Notre Dame, as well as of that delicate bijou of Gothic work, the Sainte Chapelle (constructed by Saint Louis), was Viollet-le-Duc. He had in him more of the Gothic spirit than had been vouchsafed to others of his kind. And he tells us how he became inspired for his life's work. He was taken to the Cathedral as a boy, and his eyes rested with awe and childish wonderment on the great rose window. The organ filled the church with heavenly sounds, and the young lad thought the music came from the radiant glass to which the rays of an evening sun lent additional magnificence. It seemed to his boyish imagination that the light tones supplied the treble notes, and the dark the bass.

Saint-Denis, the sepulchre of the House of France, has, alas! suffered much from mutilation and modification; yet it still remains a monument of the past, with a soil impregnated with history. Pages might be written, but we have only a few words to devote to Laon, which was the cradle of the Gothic, or to Beauvais, "melancholy fragment, having no more than head and arms, flung out in despair, like an appeal for ever ignored by heaven"; nor can we linger at Bourges—with its five porches opening on a long perspective of aisles.

It is strange, certainly, that between England and



France there should be such great differences in Gothic, notwithstanding their close connection in Norman and Plantagenet days. It is only in the northern part of France—between the Seine and the Aisne, it may be roughly outlined—has come the fullest development of what is essentially Christian architecture, for it represents in its sculptured portals, in the colour of its stained glass, and in the cruciform construction of the churches, the innate conception and medieval symbolism of religion. Churches in the South may have their Gothic too, but it is mere importation, unsuited to the people and their needs, and unsuited to the relentless blue sky overhead. The Gothic is essentially of the North, representing the piety of peoples with whom life is a serious thing, a thing of strain and upward trending. It is curious, and yet not curious, that history and the best sort of architecture have blended in this noble array of cathedrals of the North which I have here faintly described. Do they mark the high water in French civilization? That, we cannot say; but, assuredly, they point to an epoch when religious conviction and artistic sincerity went hand in hand and produced the most astounding results, results at which we moderns can only greatly marvel. Evidently, since the days of Philip Augustus, there has been a sad falling off in constructive skill. The twentieth century cannot produce the pure beauty, the soulful soaring and harmonious ensemble of the thirteenth.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE FRENCHWOMAN AND THE VOTE

THERE was evidently something changed in France when six women presented their candidature for Parliament at the General Election in May, 1910. The Code had not foreseen the contingency—the Code which regulates everything in France—and was mute upon the point. But the Conseil d'Etat, which acts as interpreter of the law, decreed that women, not being electors, were not eligible as candidates. This did not dismay the ladies; they were aware in advance of their disqualification. Their action was intended as a demonstration. The tactics may be commended to the English Suffragettes. The academic invasion was accepted with perfect good-humour by both sides. In the meetings addressed by the women, they were roundly heckled, but stood their ground bravely. Harder to bear were the witticisms of the "badauds," which led, in the case of the doctress, Mlle Le Peletier, to some lively passages of arms. The most popular, as well as the most talented candidate, was Mme Marguerite Durand. She has the gift of speech as well as a pleasing presence, which counts for so much in France. Mme Durand was director and founder of the celebrated "La Fronde," the woman's paper, that came to an end a few years ago, after having accomplished a strenuous mission during l'Affaire Dreyfus. Having great charm of delivery and a gift of holding her audience, Mme Durand

achieved considerable oratorical success. "I took care," she said to the writer, in relating her experiences, "to keep on ground which is familiar to me; I spoke exclusively of women's questions." She was frank enough to add that, had she treated of other topics, she might not have been as patiently listened to.

This conversation took place in Mme Durand's editorial office at "Les Nouvelles," a daily journal of which she is associate-editor. Flowers stood on the American roll-top desk, and the feminine "note" softened the professional rigour of the room. Mme Durand momentarily suspended her advocacy of the woman's cause to hand her visitor a bonbon. Part of her personal success is due to her insistence upon her sex: there is no pose of masculinity.

The flowers and the sweets typify, I think, the Feminist movement. Whilst the Suffragette has tried "direct action" with anything but direct success, the Feminist in France has conquered her way by smiles of persuasion and, principally, by saying little about it. Sex prejudice and hostility have not been awakened by a too vigorous propagandism. Man has won his rights by blood and blows, but women's political freedom will be due to gallantry. One of the most significant facts about the movement is that men are more bent upon it than women.

There is, indeed, a great indifference amongst the sex. Working women and duchesses care little for it—for different reasons. The women of the proletariat are accustomed to labour, but not to think of their political rights. Sober, industrious, self-respecting, they turn their energies to their own households and to their daily work in factories and laundries. The necessity of contributing to the common fund, the management of the husband and of the "gosse"—if the latter is of age to have left the care of "grand'mère" in the country—absorb every hour of the day and leave no

leisure and, probably, no inclination for political agitation. The French "better half" understands her value and her influence in her own circle and doubts whether they can be increased by the Parliamentary vote. Yet no one needs to be reminded of the strenuous part played by women in French history. They stood forth prominently in the Fronde, and the blood-thirstiness of the "Tricoteuses" constitutes one of the most terrible phases of the Revolution. Several women fought with great bravery in the trenches during the Napoleonic wars. If any question moved her profoundly, to-day, the woman of the Halles and of the other occupations of robust womanhood in Paris would stand as gallantly behind the barricades as her husband or brother. Happily, she does not feel the necessity. Possibly, the political grievance would come as the result of the political responsibility, the supply creating the demand.

The Faubourg St. Germain, at the other end of the social scale, disregards the movement for other reasons. The average "femme du monde" believes that to be associated with an agitation of the sort would be to alienate the sympathy of the men and put too great a strain upon their devotion. Already in a privileged position, she has no wish to compromise it by adopting what would be regarded as an "outré" attitude. And so the "salons" of the Ancien Régime remain cold to the question of woman's enfranchisement.

Nor does the quiet and intensely respectable "Bourgeoise" betray, on the whole, any great enthusiasm for the Cause. She throws herself into many activities without troubling to know whether she is directly represented at the Palais Bourbon. There is in her political aloofness a certain disdain: a feeling that the deputy is an expensive and expansive creature, whose method of obtaining a living is not particularly interesting. The meticulous care of her

house and the affection lavished upon the child—particularly if a son—together with the claims of a family circle, which includes remote cousins, leave her as little time as her humbler sister for public meetings and other manifestations of political activity. There is no woman in the world who takes more seriously her rôle of wife and mother, though a good deal of current French fiction tries to make us believe the opposite. Her close attention to the least domestic detail is as strong a virtue as her economy, which is practised even when there is no imperative necessity. Women in a similar position in England delegate part of their duties to housekeepers.

The Feminist movement springs from an active and intellectual group within the bourgeoisie. Every reform in France has been brought about by a minority. The Great Revolution was imposed upon the masses by ardent spirits amongst the middle classes. And, to-day, if a breach is made in the Napoleonic Code, which places women, children and idiots in the same category, it will be due to the persistent efforts of a small knot of writers and thinkers.

Now that the pulpit has largely lost its influence, power has passed to the Stage and to the Press. The plays of Brieux, Hervieu, Lavedan and Octave Mirbeau have broken down Bourgeois prejudices, widened the common outlook and enlarged sympathies for "la jeune fille." Resonant blows have been struck at the Comédie Française and the Odéon—centres of respectable middle-class opinion—for the emancipation of women. Only those of long residence in France realize how firmly fixed is the Roman tradition in the treatment of the woman. In novels and newspapers, Victor Margueritte, one of the literary brothers, who have dissolved partnership after years of close association, preaches the equality of the



sexes. At the same time, he urges the physical regeneration of the race by adopting Swedish drill for girls—a suggestion that has taken root in some schools in France. That charming and delicate analyser of the feminine heart, Marcel Prévost, is also enthusiastically pro-Feminist. In a recent article in a women's periodical, M. Prévost acknowledges that the great majority of his readers care nothing for the vote; but he urges that the suffrages of an honest mother of a family and of a laborious young woman would be of advantage to the State. A beginning might be made, he says, by bestowing the franchise upon women who have borne children. It is another form of the "blood tax"—payable by the men in military service and hitherto regarded as the "sine qua non" of citizenship.

M. Jean Finot, the brilliant director of "La Revue," advances the view that woman's vote is necessary for the salvation of Parliamentarism. Why has the representative system failed in France? Because of the absence of the feminine element. The half is not the equal of the whole, and two halves are not represented by one half. It would be difficult to find any writer of distinction in France who does not favour female suffrage.

Women novelists, if they do not, as a rule, occupy themselves with the vote, claim a large liberty for the sex. Under "New Social Influences" I have alluded to "La Rebelle," by Mme Marcelle Tinayre. The writer, we remember, imagines her heroine having to earn her living as a journalist. It is because she is the new Frenchwoman that we insist, again, on her independence and fearless resolve to answer the dictates of her own heart in the management of her love affairs. "La Rebelle" is a typical figure in France to-day, many a young girl daring to resist parental authority in the choice of a partner in life, or in the selection of a career for herself. Another novel, which

I have already mentioned as defending the new standpoint of women, is "Nietzschéenne." Mme Lesueur, the author, is a foremost writer of fiction in France and is, herself, a conspicuous example of feminine achievement. She holds the position of Vice-President of the Société des Gens de Lettres, which is proof of the literary man's acknowledgment of feminine capacity in France. The sordid side of the "dot" is now often insisted upon in books and plays.

The movement has gained a great impetus during the past year (1911). A petition for the granting of the vote to women has been accepted by the Committee of the Chamber, which is "prima facie" evidence of agreement with the principle, and a Bill has been reintroduced to give women the municipal franchise. This latter privilege is likely to be accorded in the course of the present Parliament. It will provide a powerful arm for the attainment of the Parliamentary vote. The obvious sympathy of deputies with the claims of womanhood should surprise no one familiar with the intellectual honesty of the French and their acceptance of any principle, logically stated. There is, however, a wide gulf fixed between theory and practice. If it is easy to convince by argument, it is hard to turn the generous dream into reality.

Once in possession of the municipal vote, woman will have to exercise discretion in its employment. Upon her comprehension of the situation will depend the support, or veiled hostility, of the Republican groups to an enlargement of her powers. The principal objection entertained by Ministerialists to the bestowal of the Parliamentary vote is the fear that women will use it to bring back the Church and to undo the liberating work of the Republic during the past decade. In her capacity of municipal voter woman will have a voice in the allocation of funds derived from the dispersal of the Orders; this

distribution may be made in a sense favourable or unfavourable to the present Anti-Clerical policy of the Government. Many Parliamentarians feel that the old Clerical question—resolved after immense discussion and at great risk of disturbance—would be reopened by the votes of women. The sex is the great upholder of the Church in France. On Catholic fête days in Paris and the Provinces the religious edifices are filled with women. They maintain the churches and the charitable organizations by their contributions. It has also been held that they would vote for the return of Royalty, but this is by no means clear—more especially as there is no figure of importance amongst the Pretenders.

The example of Australia and New Zealand goes to prove that women do not band themselves to vote for any particular set of principles, but are divided in their sympathies as are the men. The result, then, of increasing the electorate has been to change very little the balance of parties, though the tendency is for the middle-class woman to abstain from the polls, whilst the working-class woman votes in full strength. The presence of the feminine element in the contests has been further marked by an improvement in the moral status of the candidates.

It is difficult to say whether similar results are to be expected from Female Suffrage in France, but I think it is very doubtful. Whilst Socialism might be strengthened in the towns, the result over the country, generally, would be favourable to the Church party. The Clericals would seize eagerly upon this new force, since it is said that they have already allied themselves with the Socialists. Nor would a change in attitude towards the recognized moralizing influences in the country be regrettable since the ill effects of the opposite temper are seen every day. Anti-Clerical deputies, as we have seen, are often suspected by

supporters because of the Clericalism of their wives. It was reproached against M. Jean Jaurès, leader of the Parliamentary Socialists, that his child was baptized with water brought from the Jordan and was educated in a convent. The Clerical sympathies of the woman are often a source of embarrassment to the "priest-eating" politician. The fact that christenings, marriages, and funerals still take place at the church, even in families whose heads are politically opposed to organized religion, seems to show that this phase of Republicanism is artificial and responds to no real conviction. Still, it would be folly to conclude that the Church has not lost ground, very sensibly, as a teaching force. M. Aristide Briand, when in office, felt that Anti-Clericalism had gone far enough, but his work of conciliation, as I show earlier in this book, was arrested by the Chamber. Suffice to say that, despite the verdict of the country in the elections of May, 1910, and the implied condemnation of Combism, there was a revival of sectarian policy. This, however, was factitious and born of the political intrigues of the hour. It is quite reasonable to suppose that Woman's Suffrage would still further modify public opinion in the old controversy of Church and State.

However this may be, the Suffragists in France have drawn up an ambitious programme of social legislation. The "*recherche de la paternité*" is claimed in the interests of the mother and child as a remedy against abandonment, and has already been proposed in the Senate. At present the woman is legally defenceless, and a popular recognition of her position is to be found in the leniency with which juries treat cases of assault upon the seducer—who has shown heartless conduct. The tendency is to liberate the woman who has called attention to her wrongs by throwing vitriol or discharging a pistol at the

man. However dangerous such tolerance may be, it responds to a rough kind of justice.

If women reformers are interested in the "fille-mère," they also show an enlightened sympathy with the work-girl. This interesting young person is badly paid in many occupations connected with fashion and is the ready victim of market fluctuations. Unless supported by her parents, she has no means of subsistence during the dead season, and must fall, temporarily at least, into the ranks of prostitution. Again, factory laws are evaded. A recent Ministerial decree has limited overtime and night-work in dressmaking and kindred industries, but a great deal remains to be done both in inspection and in insistence upon proper sanitary conditions in the workshop. It is significant that women reformers, themselves, express little thanks for the efforts of legislators to regulate female labour. "We wish to have freedom of contract," they say, "and to be placed on an equality with man as regards wages and conditions." Women's congresses call attention to the blunders committed in the name of humanity by philanthropists of the other sex. "Save us from our friends in Parliament," they cry.

For fifteen years a law giving women the elemental right of disposing of their own earnings was hung up in the Senate. It has now been passed, but the sanction is incomplete without a revision of the marriage system. The married woman, who is a wage-earner, is free to draw and spend her own wages. Should she invest her money in furniture, the articles belong to the husband, in the absence of a contract—the rule in working-class marriages. To obtain, therefore, full benefit from her economic independence—at present somewhat illusory—she must have control of her goods and chattels. Such a system, known as the "*séparation de biens*," is common in a



superior class of society, but rare amongst persons of modest circumstances.

Legal disabilities weigh heavily upon the woman in business, though it is a commonplace that in France she shows remarkable aptitude and a strong common sense. The reluctance of the law to admit her responsibility in any transaction, becomes grotesque when one considers that small businesses, particularly in the Provinces, are practically run by women, the husband being a mere figure-head, and that no café or restaurant in the larger towns can dispense with its woman cashier, upon whom devolves the production of the daily balance-sheet, and, often, the general oversight of the establishment.

It is barely necessary, at this time of day, to insist on the victories of Feminism. "*Elles sautent aux yeux.*" It is difficult to take up an illustrated journal without finding a portrait of some woman who has distinguished herself in an intellectual capacity. Like Mary, the French Feminist has chosen the better part, whilst the English Martha has been cumbered with much serving—of sensational paragraphs to the newspapers. Silent and insidious is the march of Feminism, and the more formidable in consequence. The enemy has almost got possession of the town before the inhabitants are aware of it. The Frenchwoman realizes that her countrymen do not require the arguments that the Suffragette addresses to the more positive Anglo-Saxon mind. In the physical sufferings of the English protagonist there is the backward suggestion of brutality in the dominant male; it is only by force that his intellect can be reached. The spectacle of society women with torn clothes and distorted features, battling with the police, is, surely, impossible in the "*Paradise of women.*"

Professional doors have been thrown wide open to the

sex in France. The Sorbonne gives its diplomas equally to male and female students, drawing none of the distinctions so invidious and unworthy that prevail at Oxford and Cambridge; women enter the law and medicine, compete for the Prix de Rome at the Ecole des Beaux Arts, write excellent books and plays, paint and sculp and even pilot balloons. Diplomacy has gained a recruit in Mme Camille Du Gast sent to Morocco on a mission to spy out the country for French capital and enterprise. Mlle Chauvin, Mme Petit, and Mlle Myropolski have shown courage at the Bar. In medicine, the Russian and Polish girl is attracted rather than the French, Gallic sensibility being less proof, apparently, than the Slav, against the assaults on the nervous system of this arduous profession.

A movement in favour of trained nurses has begun, and seems likely to attract young women of good type instead of the creature who has hitherto been a byword for rapacity and incompetence. But the gap caused by the departure of the Sisters has not yet been filled in French hospitals.

Whether consciously or not, woman is preparing for the highest destinies. Though we may dispute her ability to combine for concerted action, we shall not disregard the importance of even unorganized political power. Great changes will arise as the result of a possession of the franchise. Not the least will be, I think, some modification of the present Parliamentary organism—a reversion of type, perhaps, to the Republic imagined by Thiers and Gambetta, where some higher place would be given to moral questions. Many observers accuse advanced and Socialistic Republicanism of the growth of materialism in the country. We may certainly expect profound changes as the result of the female vote, not merely in the partial elimination of the social evil, the equalization of parental

responsibility and the regulation of drunkenness, but in the general field of home and foreign politics. M. Jean Finot's indictment of Parliamentarism as one of the ills from which France is suffering, is answered, as I state elsewhere, by the demand for the "scrutin de liste" and proportional representation. The "scrutin d'arrondissement" has failed to produce the right stamp of man, notwithstanding the increase of 70 per cent in the Parliamentary indemnity. Will the feminine vote introduce a new and virile element capable of interpreting the higher sentiments of the country? Prophecy is rash in the circumstances, but it may be assumed that the influence of the other sex at the Palais Bourbon will result in an improvement in the Parliamentary personnel.

Dr. Max Nordau holds that woman is even more patriotic than man, and would not allow her feelings as wife and mother to prevent her from adopting a firm attitude in matters of national honour. This is probably the correct view, in which case we should see France offering a stiffer front to Teutonic aggression.

No revolution of the sort suggested by the words "Votes for Women" could be accomplished without carrying with it some of the risks that every large experiment entails. Already woman's participation in the employments hitherto reserved to man has resulted in some superficial change of type: a loss, to some extent, of feminine charm. But there is a graver danger in prospect: the growing effeminacy of the male. It would seem as if Nature had only a certain amount of virility to bestow, and that the masculinity of woman is at the expense of the manliness of man. Physiology would, no doubt, offer a dozen explanations. But the possession of the vote will only change the outward form of things. The substance is there in solid daily feminine achievement.

The different manner in which the women of the two countries have envisaged the reform is due to temperament as much as to circumstance. There is in the tactics of the Suffragette something of the "cri de cœur" of a starved heart; in France the woman has succeeded in the astonishing feat of capturing man by her natural charms, and yet in imposing herself upon the world by her intellectuality and capacity. It is quite likely that part of her indifference to the actual symbol of power resides in the fact that she prefers to exercise that subtler force, which is occult.

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## CHAPTER XV

### THE STAGE AND ITS PROBLEMS

“**Q**UAND les comédiens montent, le peuple descend” wrote that “enfant terrible” of the French stage, Octave Mirbeau, in an article on Coquelin aîné, who had just been decorated. It is certain that the comedians have “mounted” considerably in France during the past forty years, but the truth of the corollary is another matter. The theatre has achieved great prominence at the expense of a purely literary expression. It has become the great tribune for the preaching of social reform and for the discussion of questions of everyday life. It is a powerful—perhaps the most powerful—instrument in France, to-day, for effecting changes. The modification in the Divorce Laws, the enlargement of the sympathies of the Bourgeois, who is normally a narrow individual, the piercing of his self-satisfaction, have been accomplished at the price of much bold speaking. The foundation of the Théâtre Libre by André Antoine, now director of the Second National Theatre, the Odéon, was signalized by the fall of many conventions both as to the subjects to be treated on the stage and the methods of the actors. The production of Brieux’s “Les Avariés” marked the “ultima thule” of realism. That play treated of a dreadful malady and insisted on the duty of society to protect itself from contagion. Another example from the same author may be quoted: “Maternité,”



in which Brieux preached that a State which wishes to encourage children, as does France, is cruelly illogical in its treatment of the "fille-mère." Any theory, however bold, can be ventilated on the French stage. This is more than ever the case, to-day, since even the nominal censorship has been removed.

The resultant liberty has given a great impetus to the drama. The reverse holds good in England, where the theatre is bound in the shackles of Mr. Redford. Men of the calibre of Meredith, of Galsworthy and Hichens, of Thomas Hardy, Granville Barker and George Moore are hardly to be prevailed upon to give their best work in order that it shall be judged by an official of the Lord Chamberlain's Office, whose zeal may outrun his discernment. French plays, when they are transferred to England, suffer grievously in the process and become almost unrecognizable. It may be assumed that this energy in adaptation to meet the conventional requirements of the British stage would, if directed towards English masterpieces, prove equally unfortunate. The difficulty of translation is proved by the case of Bataille's "La Femme Nue." In the original, the play presented a perfectly understandable type of a French model; in English "The unveiled woman" (interpreted as "Dame Nature") became, in the opinion of many persons, a coarsened and incomprehensible creature.

The predominance of the stage has been accompanied by the decadence of literature. The great growth in the material prosperity of France has brought about a regrettable change in literary manners. When the aristocracy of wealth was an aristocracy of culture, books held their proper place; but, to-day, a new class has arisen, which, enriched by a close attention to industry and commercial enterprise, is no longer qualified to direct the taste of the

public. Being incapable of enjoying the higher forms of intellectual pleasure, the new plutocracy demands new forms of mental stimulus and diversion.

The decline of the literary salons dates from the same period, that is to say, from the commencement of the Third Republic. There being no longer a society intensely interested in literature and taking its pleasure in literary discussions, hostesses gathered about them mere collections of people to play Bridge, which is the negation of conversation, or to discuss pictorial art and automobilism, neither of which makes a large demand upon general ideas. A great extension of exhibitions of painting and sculpture and every form of spectacle making an appeal to the eye, followed the downfall of the book. The hurry and multitudinous occupations of the age have also reduced the leisure of the reading class, with the result that the stage has become the great medium of enlightenment, just as the picture salons have become the popular educators of the eye. This influence has been felt by "lettrés" such as M. René Doumic and M. Jules Lemaître, who have been forced to arrange their "conférences" for those with little culture. But this symptom is by no means singular to France, where the literary élite has, perhaps, adapted itself more gracefully than elsewhere to the new conditions. Ideas must be conveyed to the public "à coup de crayon," with the flash of the impressionist.

The importance of the theatre in Paris is seen in the attention given to it by the Press. Columns are devoted every day, in the form of echoes, interviews or critiques, to stage problems, plays and players. The book, on the contrary, has no reviews worthy of the name. A dark mystery hangs over the publication of a new work, as if the powers were leagued to prevent the public from buying it. This aphasia is partly due to the effulgence of Press

reviews in the past, which brought about its own condemnation. A "chef d'œuvre" does not appear every day on the bookstalls, though these too friendly critics would have us believe so.

Actors and actresses have benefited from the progress made in the appreciation of their art, yet it remains true that no actor or actress penetrates to the high places of Parisian society. This is due to the old prejudices surrounding the stage, which have not yet been obliterated in that stronghold of caste, the Faubourg St. Germain. Nothing surprises the Parisian artist more than the social position usually accorded to prominent members of the profession in England. And yet, from the point of view of professional education, the French stage is more analogous to the learned professions than it is in England, where an actor's training is quite haphazard and mainly derived from provincial tours. Neither diction nor the technique of his art is taught him. In consequence of the insistence on early training, the general level of acting is infinitely higher in France than in the so-called Anglo-Saxon countries. The strange affectations of speech adopted by the British actor to underline his meaning would never be tolerated by the meanest theatre in France, where naturalness of voice and gesture is a "sine qua non."

Just as the interpretation is better, so is the art of the dramatist. This is not so much due to any inherent superiority in French dramatic methods as in the greater freedom allowed, in the intelligence of the acting and the sympathetic attitude of the public towards manifestations of art. Mr. Galsworthy's "Justice," for instance, could be compared with the finest work of Henry Bataille, just as Mr. J. M. Barrie's "What Every Woman Knows" would rank in subtlety and psychology with the plays of Paul Hervieu or Henri Lavedan. A wider field for treatment

and a keener public sentiment are merely needed to reinforce the British stage and bring it intellectually to the level of the French. A good deal of cant has been talked, especially in articles in French publications, on the decadence of the British stage, but those critics who deride—and, no doubt, justly—the “leg pieces” so popular in London, as the very antithesis of art, are apt to forget that it is a case of the pot calling the kettle black. Nothing could be less pleasing, æsthetically, or more repugnant from the standpoint of decency, than the ordinary French café-concert. There is infinitely more art in the English music-hall.

Restrictions act upon the drama in England, as the Locomotive (Roads) Act did upon the construction of motor-cars. The man with the red flag is always present on the English stage—in musical comedy he becomes, suddenly, blind in one eye—and the dramatic pace is limited to his pedestrian gait. Other nations have passed us in the race. We are still in leading-strings, whilst, in intellectually freer communities, the dramatist with his battle-axe is thumping on the door of “social subjects.”

There is a direction in which British dramatic art is far ahead. The children’s play is practically unknown in France, and yet the young generation has a right to representation in the theatre. One reason why there is no children’s drama is that there are no children—between the ages of the hoop and second childhood. The crudities of Polichinelle are too much for the budding sensibility and critical sense of the young maiden of six or seven. Even her brother, a few years older, is not impressed, and the little boy is never quite as precocious as the little girl of the same age. Plays for children given at the spas and seaside are serious dramatic compositions, having nothing in common with “Peter Pan.” The French child early

throws away a belief in fairies. Even the Bonhomme Noël scarcely survives a very tender age, though he has his uses as a present-giver. The infant being exhorted to good behaviour is addressed in such locutions as "Sois sage" ("be a philosopher"), "sois raisonnable" ("be reasonable"). There is always an appeal to the intellect. If this does not suffice, then, as Mlle Claire de Pratz reminds us, in one of her novels, the vision of the mother is conjured up by the words: "Tu fais de la peine à ta mère."

Too much liberty may degenerate into licence, and the stage in France sometimes suffers from that reproach. There is no explanation but pruriency or a morbid taste for some of the subjects discussed. This unfortunate tendency to pander to unwholesome desire has been very marked of late years and provides the reverse side of the medal. Yet it is impossible not to feel that a great avenue for free expansion exists in this institution of an untrammelled theatre. Dramatists in the forward rank have acquired the right to be regarded as serious reformers. Eugène Brieux had a place on the Extra-Parliamentary Commission to inquire into the causes of depopulation, Paul Hervieu sat on a Committee to reform the Marriage Code. These are signs of the times. The Press and the Stage are two weapons of government in France to-day.

Plays have given rise to riots for political and other causes. A struggle between the Romanticists and the followers of the Classical school accompanied the production of Victor Hugo's "Hernani" at the Comédie Française; and, again, there was considerable agitation when "Thermidor" by Victorien Sardou, was interdicted by the Prefect of Paris because of its satire on leaders of the Revolution. "Rabagas," by the same author, was also objected to on the ground that it scoffed at



Gambetta. In quite recent times, "Le retour de Jérusalem" provoked anti-Semitic opposition because of its Jewish atmosphere. Again, "Après Moi," by Henry Bernstein, produced at the Comédie Française in the early part of 1911, had to be withdrawn on account of the violent manifestations by the Camelots du Roi or Royal Society, who objected that the author, besides belonging to the hated race, had deserted when a youth from the army. Though he made reparation by rejoining the colours, the fact of his desertion was held to justify a violent outbreak against the Hebrews. Sardou's "Sorcière," when played by Sarah Bernhardt, with all her emotional power, aroused, on the other hand, the passion of the Anti-Clericals, as it depicts the Inquisition in full working order. Happily, the "Entente Cordiale" is too solidly grounded to be disturbed by the exposure of English intrigue in "Le Procès de Jeanne d'Arc," in which La Grande Sarah gives so interesting a rendering of the Maid.

The different phases of society are faithfully reflected in the stage. There is a vast difference, say, between the Comédie Française and the Comédie Royale. They are at the opposite poles of theatrical representation, corresponding to the infinite degrees of French society and thought. In the National Theatre you have the classic traditions of the French stage, together with a repertoire that includes the chefs d'œuvre of Racine, of Corneille and Molière. The Comédie Royale represents, on the other hand, the light grace of French comedy, the "esprit gaulois." Dialogue and situation are bright and amusing, instinct with the vivacity of the French. The atmosphere is intimate, as if the comedies or "revue" were being played in a salon, before an audience composed of friends. Each theatre has its character clearly marked from the rest. The Sarah Bernhardt is consecrated to the genius of the



SARAH BERNHARDT



great tragedienne, who is still the first actress in the world. The Vaudeville seems to have lost ground since Réjane departed to found her own theatre in the Rue Blanche, the most charming and prettily arranged playhouse in Paris; but it has produced some notable plays of late years, such as "Le Divorce" of Paul Bourget, "La Barrikade" and "Le Tribun," by the same author. In the former play, the novelist, who is now, apparently, resolved to conquer the stage, places in opposition the two theses in regard to marriage: its indissolubility, the attitude of the Church, and the other view that it is a social contract, which can be determined, like any other contract, at the will of the parties. In "La Barrikade" he has, also, a serious problem to discuss: the position of capital and labour. The play gives an unenviable picture of the demagogue, but an appeal to the Bourgeoisie to defend its inheritance by a display of energy and cohesion rings like a clarion note through the piece. The Renaissance is one of the most vital theatres of Paris. Some of the strongest of social comedies have been staged there of late years, particularly during the tenure of M. Guitry, whose impersonations are always marked with great strength. Here were produced: "La Rafale" and "Le Voleur," by M. Henri Bernstein, both of them distinguished for the intensity of their situations. In "Samson," by the same author, M. Guitry gave a striking picture of the self-made man under the strong emotion of a thwarted love passion. The actor, who is, probably, the most talented in Paris to-day, has made his greatest success in another Bernstein play, "La Griffé," which, apart from its merits as the work of a young man of twenty, is noteworthy for a last act which shows the downfall of an old statesman, under the weight of political scandal. In his delineation of the "débacle," Guitry recalls, both in his acting and in

his appearance, Irving in "The Bells." With M. Guitry's success in Bernstein impersonations, we must associate Mme Simone, certainly one of the most gifted actresses in Paris. The traditions of the Renaissance are now being carried on by Abel Tarride (the Sir Charles Wyndham of the French stage) and a company which, until recently, included Mlle Marthe Regnier and Mlle Marthe Brandès.

The Gymnase, also, produces modern comedy. Bataille's "La Vierge Folle," (the Foolish Virgin) is the best example of that clever writer's talent. The moral tendencies of the play (which seems to give a sanction to the "fugue" of a man of forty with a young society girl) may be disputed, but not its palpitating character. Bataille has the Ibsen faculty of conveying the sensation of impending catastrophe, as well as the suggestion that his subjects have lived before and are merely continuing their existence on the stage. Bataille, like the other "strong men" of the French stage, Bernstein, Brioux and Mirbeau, is for ever prodding at conventions and examining ruthlessly into the most hoary and hallowed traditions.

Octave Mirbeau has something of Zola's mordant power and strength of depicting humanity at its worst. There is the same iconoclasm, the same pessimism in them both. In "Les Affaires sont les Affaires" ("Business is Business") Mirbeau preaches, with crushing force, on the text of "the root of all evil." In "Le Foyer" he gives a painful and, no doubt, exaggerated picture of a senator and member of the Academy, who proves to be an utter scoundrel. Octave Mirbeau is the most relentless of the modern dramatists. His types have a quality of villainy not possessed by any others. Brioux, on the contrary, has the temper of an apostle. If, like Peter the Hermit, he calls a crusade, it is with some hope of attaining the Holy Sepulchre. But Mirbeau is content to show us the place of skulls.



It is a difference of temperament, perhaps, rather than a divergence of aim.

No greater contrast could be imagined between the poignant emotionalism of this school, and the theatre of Rostand. Arriving at a moment when the world wearied of the sordid realism of Zola and his imitators, when Dumas fils was dead and Victorien Sardou "*vieux jeu*," Edmond Rostand obtained instant recognition with his romantic plays in verse. His "*Cyrano de Bergerac*" is a masterpiece, which struck the full note of national life, uplifting the theatre to the heroic level, inspiring to fine deeds, evoking the glory and panoply of old France. When, after years of expectancy, "*Chantecler*" was produced, it is little wonder that it failed to provoke the profound impression of genius awakened by "*Cyrano*." "*Chefs d'œuvre*" rarely repeat themselves. But if it was lacking in its dramatic qualities, it shone as an astonishing piece of literary legerdemain. It was a real "*tour de force*," only possible by a man having the verbal resources and ingenuity of an Aristophanes. Where Rostand lags behind the Greek satirist is in knowledge of the dramatic situation. Rostand represents the revolt from naturalism; excesses in one direction always bring about reaction. This brilliant poet-dramatist knows how to speak to the heart of France, to conjure up the picture of rustling gallants, to fill the world again with brave spirits. He represents the old time and tradition, the chivalry of other days. Contrast his proud figure of Chantecler, gripping the soil of France in his claws (symbol of the peasant and his attachment to the land) with those sordid, soulless creatures, who people the pages of "*La Terre*." This explains the vogue of Rostand, apart from the beauty and inspiration of his work: the feeling that he speaks in the name of France, and enshrines in his heroes, whether Cyrano or the Coq, something

of the past glory of Gaul. Chantecler is the Gallic Coq, the embodiment of a nation's pride, and the incarnation, also, of a nation's failings. France has expected the dawn of liberty to rise at the trumpet call of her Revolution.

Coquelin aîné, the last of the great romantic actors of France, was cast for the rôle of Chantecler ; indeed, the play seems to have been written round his personality. But it was not to be, and the sonorous-voiced comedian passed to the Great Beyond before the play was in a condition to be produced.

The type of good French comedy is presented by Alfred Capus. Always excellently written, his plays please because of the sympathetic development of the characters, their genuine sentiment and the fact that "tout s'arrange" before the fall of the curtain. Capus comedy is sound and wholesome and in the best style of the French stage.

Maurice Donnay's career provides an unusual element of romance. Twenty years ago, he was a "chansonnier" of Montmartre, composing verse, to order, for the patrons of the "Chat Noir." One night he left the famous cabaret, and, descending the slippery sides of the Butte, arrived at the Boulevards, where he left a play with the manager of a theatre. That play was a French version of "Lysistrata" of Aristophanes, and gave an amusing modern rendering of the revolt of the wives and sweethearts against the neglect of their warrior lords. To-day, Maurice Donnay is a member of the Académie Française, has the "entrée" to the "Comédie," and is noted for plays that paint Parisian life with a delicate, suggestive brush.

Francis de Croisset is one of a number of young men, who present the very light side of Parisian drama, and have the ability to say the "risqué" thing with an air of innocence and detachment. There is no language that lends itself with greater grace to such employment than the French.

Despite the critics, and they are many, the Comédie Française maintains its premier position. It is still the best all-round theatre, notwithstanding the competition of brilliant playhouses along the Boulevards. This superiority comes from the continuity of training and tradition rendered possible in a State-aided institution. No private enterprise, subject to varying conditions of management and financial resources, can maintain the same permanent level of excellence. It is possible to find as talented a troupe, but, nowhere else, is there that nice attention to detail which marks the productions of the "Maison de Molière." Yet it is permissible, of course, to object to perfection of finish on the ground that it destroys the value of the picture by placing the merely secondary in undue relief. The National Theatre has the advantage of the resources of the Conservatoire and, also, of the education that a classical repertoire gives in developing the talent of the actor. Mmes Bartet and Cécile Sorel, Mounet-Sully, the doyen; Le Bargy, de Feraudy, Georges Berr, and the other members of the company uphold the traditions of a house, which numbers among its illustrious children: Talma, and Got, Rachel, Sarah Bernhardt and Coquelin, though the last two achieved their greatest reputation outside.

Some of the regulations binding members are Draconian in their severity and bear the impress of Napoleon, who signed the famous "decree of Moscow," which is the charter of "sociétaires" and "pensionnaires." In one respect this theatre, which dates from the days of the Roi Soleil, is quite modern. There is a system of profit-sharing in vogue, which establishes the material difference between "sociétaires" and "pensionnaires."

Amongst the "théâtres à côté" of Paris, the best-known is the Grand Guignol, which is celebrated for its horrors. It is probably responsible for more nightmares than any

theatre in the world. The most sensational of its recent plays was "En Plongée," which gave a remarkable picture of a submarine and the terror that exists aboard, when it is realized that the commander, a morphino-maniac, has neglected to take proper precautions and is casting away his ship.

The "Capucines" and the Théâtre Michel are band-box playhouses, which enshrine the gaiety and wit of the Boulevardier, and are extraordinarily clever in their reviews and playlets.

The French theatre is incomparable in technique and in the artistic construction of its plays. The rank and file of the stage exhibit a finish in their work unknown in England, except amongst the first flight. But, structurally considered, most of the French playhouses are dusty and incommodious and would prove terrible death-traps in case of a panic. It is a tribute to the acting that people go to the theatre at all, for, to the inconvenience of the seating arrangements, is added the extortion of the attendants. Yet, with all its physical disadvantages, the theatre is the most permanent and, at the same time, varied intellectual entertainment that Paris provides. And it is, certainly, one of the most characteristic of French industries: brilliant and full of racial temperament.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE PRESS AND PUBLIC OPINION

IF you judge the Press to be an organ for your enlightenment and your political instruction—and little more—then I can imagine your gratitude to the British institution, which is still, in many respects, the best Press in the world; if, on the other hand, you regard the newspaper as a vehicle for amusement, and for the satisfaction of a curiosity more or less legitimate, you will surely find the ideal in the ephemeral literature of the Boulevards. Nothing more sprightly, more uniformly entertaining, exists in the world of the printing press. It may be that the Briton takes his politics a little too seriously, that the ponderous affectations of his Parliamentarians should be treated with a little more imagination and with a little of the laughter of the gods. But there is, obviously, the other extreme: the “esprit moqueur,” that dangerous Parisian quality which is death to so many efforts at reform. The versatility and brilliance of the Press are its own condemnation. It insists on the paradox, on the light view, on poking fun, on a fatal levity about serious subjects. And yet, admit it, O travelled Englishman! a course of reading of the Paris Press is very unsettling for the more sober diet of Fleet Street. In every corner of the sheet is the perfectly turned sentence. Even the puff paragraph, that bane of the reader, is composed with an insidious art and speciousness that



compel attention. We are but human (even the youngest and most wide-awake of us), and when that paragraph begins with a nicely turned allusion to some historical event we are tempted to read further, only to tumble into the abyss of the paid "réclame." It is, certainly, very ingeniously done. "Non bis in idem" does not seem to have any application to the case, for, to-morrow, we shall, assuredly, fall into the same gilded trap. Perhaps, the Paris world loves being humbugged. In any case, advertising as we know it in England—"in plain figures," as you may say, though this is no longer entirely true—has little effect upon the French purchaser. He, or rather she, must have her palate tickled by fine phrases. One grows accustomed to the hyperbolic announcements of the theatrical column, where every piece is a "chef d'œuvre," and every little actress a Rachel or a Sarah Bernhardt. Notwithstanding the daily recurrence of this literary extravagance, in the name of commerce, it is somewhat startling to find a column on the front page of a literary paper of acknowledged position given up to an account, beautifully embellished with epigrams, of the opening of a dressmaker's establishment. But it is the custom of the country, and, no doubt, Paris has the Press it deserves and wants to have.

In the sense of reflecting the national life, the Press, like the theatre, holds up a mirror to nature. It is a faithful reproduction of the defects and qualities of the French character. If we come to a more intimate consideration of morals and manners, shall we find as high a standard of journalistic methods on this side, as on the other, of the Channel? It is dangerous to launch into generalities, and, moreover, I have treated of comparative morality in an earlier chapter of this book; at the same time, it is necessary here to say that the independence of the better

class of English organ—an independence often in the face of financial pressure—is not a general characteristic of Paris contemporaries. This apparent inferiority arises from difference in conception of the journalistic mission. Rightly or wrongly, the conductor of an English journal is convinced that the world is waiting for his opinion, that he must weigh it carefully and deliver it truly. His Parisian “confrère” has not the same happy illusions; in any case, he takes a lighter view of his responsibilities. This colours the whole of his work. It makes him infinitely more readable and infinitely less reliable. And yet I have come across a perfectly true piece of information, even in the French Press.

There is little comparison between the literary excellencies of the two systems, the British and the French. The meanest paragraph in the Parisian paper is turned with an airy grace, which makes the efforts of its British contemporary seem elephantine. Take only one department of newspaper work: the “faits divers,” or, as we should say, the police-court column. The adventures of the “grisette,” which have ended disastrously; the “beau jeune homme,” who has gone forth to conquer and has succeeded better than he anticipated; the dark deeds of a band of Apaches; the strange story of an English lord—are not all these things told in the chronicles of the Boulevards, with a dramatic sense and an eye for form, which are often absent from the narrative of the English scribe? A past master in this very human sort of journalism was one Arthur Dupin, who was the “crime specialist” of the “Journal.” To him is due the picturesque name of Apache, given to the Paris footpad, which has cast an altogether undeserved aureole over his sordid achievements. Dupin’s art was great in “reconstituting” a drama for the benefit of his readers. There was a realism in it that was almost

frightening, and would not have disgraced the "Grand Guignol." Every Paris organ of information has its "writer-up" of crime, and reading of the sort, to the susceptible person, must inspire many a bad dream. This "étalage" of lurid or highly spiced details becomes less humorous when one considers its effect upon the young and the half-educated. The hero-worship of the successful bank-forgery, the morbid curiosity that is aroused by the publication of sensational murders, has led many a young man to the penal colonies or the guillotine.

The lack of reticence is, from the English point of view, a regrettable feature of Paris journalism, but that same readiness to "dire tout" is, of course, responsible for a variety and freshness of outlook and comment, which add immeasurably to the pleasure of perusal, if the reader can relieve his mind of all thought of the social consequences. "Indiscretions" make the Paris Press desperately human and entertaining—and good government sometimes impossible. Amid many professions of patriotism and much waving of the Tricolor, the journals of "largest circulation" are not unwilling to open their columns to information, which, in England at all events, would be treated as a secret only to be whispered in the secluded places of politics. "Cotton-wool" writing and "reading between the lines" are thus quite unnecessary pieces of ingenuity. One reason, perhaps, why liberty has a tendency to descend to licence is because the liberty is recent. In the days of the Empire, the Press was kept in leading strings, and woe betide the "pamphleteer" who offended against the Tuileries. The explosive spirit is now taking its revenge.

The Parisian is "moqueur," sceptical, and all that; so are his publicists. To the Boulevardier nothing is sacred. He is ready to "thee and thou" an Emperor, to slap a

Minister on the back. The ample proportions of M. Fallières are the constant subject of jest in the evening and weekly Press, and no day passes without a barbed personal pleasantry being directed to some one in authority. This lack of respect for the powers marks one of the great differences in the Latin and Anglo-Saxon temperaments. Until Mr. Lloyd George (and is he not a Celt?) set the fashion, one had to go back to the eighteenth century in England to find examples of the lampooning spirit, which is the daily joy of the Boulevardier and the inspiration of those who minister to his amusement. The leading article enshrines the soul of the paper. In France it has come to be a wispish and waspish thing of thirty lines or so. The writer has either a "serpent's tongue" or a very pretty wit—according to circumstances. The late Henri Harduin was celebrated for his leaderettes in the "Matin." They were models of conciseness, betraying a keen sense of humour and of a robust good sense. It could only be objected that he was somewhat materialistic in his treatment of lofty matters. Since his day nearly every paper has adopted short articles to express its editorial opinion. They are usually pungent, and, in some cases, consistently amusing. It is an agreeable relief to turn to one of these sprightly effusions after contact, say, with the ordinary British "leader," which is as indigestible—if one excepts the evening Press in London—as a hard-boiled pudding. It is curious that whilst great progress has been made in the intelligent arrangement and reporting of news, the gentleman who sits down at nine o'clock at night with a quill pen, to manufacture British opinion, appears to be unconscious that the world has moved since quill pens were invented. He is still as prodigiously plodding and platitudinous as ever. Nor can it be otherwise considering the conditions under which he is required to work. What

are "opinions" worth upon a speech which is in process of being delivered? This outburst is prompted by long-suffering. There is something exasperating in the "cliché" which heralds, say, a "moral victory"—O horrible expression—at a by-election.

But in France the long and lonely leader is abolished. In its place is an extraordinarily interesting feature. Prominent men contribute to the leading newspapers articles over their own signature upon matters of which they have first-hand cognizance. The result is a great addition to popular knowledge of scientific and other subjects. The astronomer Flammarion is a constant contributor to the Press. Academicians write with charming simplicity upon all sorts of learned topics. To read the "article de fond" of the "Figaro" is a liberal education. It is contributed by quite a number of "sommités." Marcel Prévost writes, in his delicate and allusive style, of "The Feminine Letter," revealing the mysteries of my lady's heart, when she takes pen in hand. Capus will examine some problem of the theatre with consummate art; Abel Bonnard treats delightfully of a phase of Parisian life; Georges Cain evokes old Paris with an infinite charm; "Foemina" will probe, with silvern pen, into human sensibility, an explorer in the by-paths of psychology. Contrast articles of this sort, fresh and topical as they always are, with the hackneyed: "In reviewing the events of last night (or last month), we are once more convinced . . ."

Both the "Journal" and the "Matin" print excellent "articles de fond." The statistician Dr. Jacques Bertillon writes frequently for the former, and, also, Gabriel Hanotaux, who is a former Minister for Foreign Affairs. His articles on foreign politics are not only the fruit of sound knowledge, but are conveyed in a language which is re-



markedly picturesque. In the "Matin" the politician provides a frequent dish. Camille Pelletan, though an execrable Minister, is a brilliant journalist, and he handles subjects of the day with great lucidity. The different Reporters on the Parliamentary Commissions, also, take the public into their confidence, through the medium of this enterprising journal. If one has to pay more for one's taxes, it is some satisfaction to know the reason from an authoritative pen.

A large part of this chapter might profitably discuss the close connection of the Press with politics. There were thirty-seven journalists in the Parliament which came to an end in April, 1910; but legion is the name of those having some connection, past or present, with the calling. The Press enters every Cabinet meeting in the person of one or other of the Ministers. M. Briand is a journalist, and so was M. Clemenceau. Though both began life in other professions, M. Briand, as a lawyer, M. Clemenceau, as a doctor, the Press eventually claimed them. Clemenceau's trenchant articles in the "Aurore," on the Dreyfus case, can never be forgotten: they were models of polemical writing; and M. Briand, at one stage of his meteoric career, was keeper of the delicate conscience of the "Lanterne," which formerly was the chosen medium for the "fougue" and fire of Henri Rochefort. That was long ago. That singular figure, Rochefort, who was likened by Jules Lemaitre to one of the grinning masks of comedy and tragedy on the proscenium of a theatre, has been in more trouble with the authorities than any other publicist of Paris. He was subjected to transportation for participation in the Commune, and has suffered various terms of imprisonment and fought innumerable duels as a tribute to the vitriolic quality of his pen.

Rochefort belongs to the old school, which considered

it was necessary to vilify an antagonist and provoke him to an encounter with arms in order to establish one's reputation as a gentleman of the Press. Rochefort still writes a daily article in the "Patrie." He has the London cabman's faculty of never repeating himself in his bad language. Though he has sympathized all his life long with revolution, he does not like the ordinary Republican, and his present attitude is one of violent contempt of the Administration.

Journalism has changed vastly since Rochefort first took pen in hand. The days of the "one man" newspaper are over. Formerly, the favourite organ of public opinion consisted of an article written by the office celebrity, and the rest was a mass of ill-arranged news of the day before yesterday. Those were the times of "opinions" certainly, but opinions often founded upon inaccurate premisses, and hence, of little value. Of late years, the "journal d'information" has arisen, in which a serious attempt is made to give the news of the world in the preceding four-and-twenty hours. The "Matin" and the "Journal" show as much enterprise in the collection of their news as their most active contemporaries in London. During the Russo-Japanese War, the correspondence of Ludovic Naudeau in the "Journal" was as good and serious work as was to be found anywhere. Jules Hedeman, in the "Matin," Stéphane Lauzanne, its editor; Marcel Hutin and André Mévil in the "Echo de Paris"—also a first-class "journal d'information"—are of the best type of correspondent. Charles Huret's work in the "Figaro"—he discovered America for the French Bourgeois—is admirable of its kind. Famous writers are harnessed to the Press. There is not the same divorce, as in England, between literature (or what is pleased to call itself such) and newspaper writing. The novelist wins his spurs in the "feuilleton"; the young

aspirant to politics imposes himself upon his public by his contributions on weighty matters of the law and municipal procedure. Journalism, as we know, leads to everything, provided one leaves it early enough. The Press is the recruiting ground of the public man in France. The early exercise of the pen is an undoubted sharpener of the faculties, but the "journalistic sense" thus developed may sometimes be inimical to the highest interests of State.

Time was when poets had their place, just as the "chroniqueurs" had theirs, on the Paris newspaper. The last of the poet-journalists was Catulle Mendès—a name, was it not? for a poet—who died in 1909 as the result of a fall from a railway carriage in a tunnel: a tragic end to a brilliant brain. The last of the "chroniqueurs" was Aurélien Scholl. His notion of the art of "keeping a journal" was a cheery and often learned and witty chronicle of Paris doings. There is something to be said for the system of seeing the events of the day through the eyes of a "flâneur." One has to train to be a "chroniqueur" just as the jockey has to get down to his weight to ride at Longchamp. Men assembled daily for exercise in the art of persiflage and badinage. All the gossip of the day, political, literary, artistic, filtered through the fine mesh of their brains. In an atmosphere charged with conversational electricity they said and thought and wrote wonderful things. Scholl, Mendès, Alexandre Dumas fils, Victorien Sardou, and all the bright wits of the Second Empire and the early days of the Third Republic met every afternoon, in a Boulevard café, where they discussed the events of the day and, amid the fumes of "the green goddess," evolved those sparkling articles which were the joy of the man who knew and loved his Paris. The tradition lingers, but the gathering of the literary clans is more meagre than of yore, and the Attic salt is rarer at

the board. These are the days of the telegraph and the tape-machine: we cannot wait for subtle processes of the intellectual crucible. Yet, considering the speed at which every one has to work, nowadays, the polish attained by the Boulevard organs is remarkable. What expenditure of talent is here—to live only for a day! This little article we have read, nebulous and whimsical—a little “chef d’œuvre” in its way—will perish in an hour.

Criticism is a strong point in the daily output of journalistic brains. Emile Faguet in the “Débats,” Adolphe Brisson in the “Temps,” are famous critics of the drama. The meanest paper devotes a large attention to the things of the spirit—and the flesh—translated by the stage. Whilst it is sometimes difficult to discover from the article whether the play is good or bad, the critic has generally taken infinite pains to lay bare the “état d’âme” of the dramatist, and to expose the working of his puppets. You will understand the development of the play, you will understand the underlying motive of the author, but it is quite possible that you will not gather what has been the verdict of the public—whether the play is a success or not. This omission arises from the fact that every critic is a dramatist on his own account, and fears that his censure shall be misconstrued. And, again, the gentle art of log-rolling is not unknown on the Boulevards. On the whole, I prefer the French to the English article, which, except in some notable cases, attempts no criticism of any real kind. When it condescends to preach a homily on the presentation of a problem of life, which it has not understood, it considers that the word “unpleasant” is a quite sufficient answer to any disquieting issues that may be raised.

The halfpenny journal flourishes in Paris at the expense of the higher-class publications. The “Temps,”

with somewhat anti-Ministerial tendencies, remains a monument of moderation and accurate information. Until a short while ago, it was the only journal which troubled to spell the name of British politicians, even the most distinguished, correctly, or to give its readers an intelligent summary of events outside France. Though its cheaper rivals are, to-day, well informed of the course of English affairs, the "Temps" maintains a prestige for sobriety and for the semi-official character of its political pronouncements. The foreigner, in regarding the English Press, is often puzzled to determine which organ speaks with the voice of the Ministry of the day, and the assumption that the "Times" is the official spokesman has led to strange mistakes. In France, the "Temps," or the stately "Journal des Débats," and sometimes, the "Matin" are chosen as the channels of official information. Yet it is rather in what they do not say, that one finds the Government influence strongest. For instance: an awkward incident arises, let us say, on the high seas. "As the result," we read, "of an optical illusion, caused by a heavy Christmas dinner, the officers on a Turkish Dreadnought salute a British tramp steamer with a charge of shell, which kills the captain's parrot and wounds the cabin boy." The facts are related, gravely, in the Paris journals, but without comment, because the Quai d'Orsay has reminded possible delinquents of the international consequences of an excess of language. There has been a "mot d'ordre" to suspend judgment. The wise scribe knows the value of the Secret Service Fund, and postpones his editorial fire until there is no longer much danger of hitting a friendly Power.

The best-informed political writer is M. Tardieu (Georges Villiers), who supplies the "Temps" with interviews with diplomats. Being formerly in the Service as



Secretary of Embassy, he knows how to unlock the lips of those who are supposed to be the repositories of State secrets. The "Temps," like the excellent and literary "Débats," belongs to the elder family of newspapers. A dignified member of the same group is the "Gaulois," which, though directed by a Jew, who has 'verted to the Roman Church, has constituted itself the champion of the Altar and the Throne. It appears, sometimes, to be "plus royaliste que le roi," and the Duc d'Orleans, as head of the cadet branch of the Bourbons and Pretender-in-chief to the French throne—if one rejects the claims of the Naundorfs to be the descendants of Louis XVII—has had the air of letting it down rather badly. Nevertheless, this eminently respectable organ, written exclusively "for gentlemen, by gentlemen"—there is no member of the staff without his particle—continues, suavely and with perfect breeding, to espouse the cause—the poor, hopeless cause—of the Faubourg St. Germain. It is remarkably cheerful under adversity. The director is a rich man and has married the daughter of a Duke, which is, surely, a sign of prosperity and of a not too dolorous view of the future of France.

The "Gil Blas" is a newspaper with a history. In its unregenerate days, it coquetted openly, brazenly, with the demi-monde. Its golden-haired readers and readers with dyed whiskers have had to turn elsewhere for their daily pabulum—to the "Rire," perhaps, or "Fantasio." Other, and, no doubt, higher destinies are reserved for the former servant of light-mindedness. A new-comer amongst the newspapers is "Excelsior," run upon the familiar English lines of an illustrated journal. It tells, in photographs, of the events of the preceding twenty-four hours. One of the most interesting publications is "Comœdia," entirely devoted to the theatre. Paris is, probably, the only capital in the world where a six-page paper could

"print itself" profitably, having the pretty actress and her art as its only "raison d'être." But, then, every Frenchman has an unfinished play lying somewhere about his "appartement." Dramatists are as common as the decorated in Paris, where the ribbon has become the sign of mediocrity—to believe those who are undecorated. There is a host of small journals, some of which have been the cradle of great ambitions, subsequently realized. The "Aurore," the "Lanterne," "L'Humanité" belong to the advanced guard in politics. They are very small dogs, but their bark is loud and fierce, whenever Ministry or Opposition, as the case may be, is up to any knavish tricks. "L'Humanité" is directed by Jean Jaurès, the leader of the Parliamentary Socialists, and is interesting on that account. He is a better orator than writer, and his daily admonitions to the Government do not, it seems, promote a large circulation. The Monarchical movement keeps its advocates in the Press, both influential and obscure. The really fighting organ in this cause is the "Action Française," which loves not the "Gaulois." Its young men occasionally become fired with a propagandist zeal and operate a "coup," which brings them to the police-court. One of the advantages of a multitudinous Press is that every section of the community can be represented. Between, say, the "Guerre Sociale," in which Gustave Hervé preaches the doctrines of the Social Revolution, and "La Croix," the very militant knight of the Church, there are a thousand degrees, responding to the variations in temperament of this quicksilver and, at the same time, individualistic people.

Whilst the Government, in matters of foreign politics, can put its hands upon the Press, it is powerless, apparently, to stop official leakages. Yet it has its own medium for announcements, which is known as the "Officiel." Its

size is small, but its pages are many on the days of great debates in the Chambers. The utterances of deputies are reported at some length; those of Ministers are generally given verbatim. Presidential and Departmental decrees and "promotions" of all sorts are published. The issue of lists for the Legion of Honour and other orders means a large circulation for the "Officiel," for every other man looks to see whether he or his cousin is not among the be-ribboned. On such occasions the "camelot" extracts from the expectant candidate as much as three francs for a copy, which is ordinarily sold for a sou. It is worth that sum, evidently, to know that you have exchanged the plain ribbon of the "chevalier" for the rosette of the "officier."

This chapter, though nominally devoted to the French Press, deals, almost exclusively, with the Parisian Press. Paris is France in this connection. There are journals of influence and importance published beyond the periphery of the metropolis, such as the "Dépêche," of Toulouse, which is said to have a million circulation through its various local editions; the "Progrès," of Lyons; the "Petit Marseillais," the "France du Sud-Ouest," of Bordeaux, and various other newspapers of great repute; but, generally speaking, the provincial "thunderer" is uninteresting save as an indication of the direction of the political wind. Paris overshadows everything; this is one of the unfortunate results of centralization; but the Minister of the Interior watches the effect of Governmental policy on the country in the local sheets. An examination of these will often show a divergence between Paris and Provincial opinion. Whilst there is talk of revolution in the cities, the conservative peasantry will be found urging the Government to show energy in the repression of disorder. Pataud, who plunged Paris in darkness by organizing a strike of electricians, has no following outside the

large towns. If the countryman had his way the demagogue would have been swinging, long ago, from the top of the monument on the Place de la République, the scene of many of his audacious attempts to embroil the Parisian artisan with the army.

The "Petit Parisien" and the "Petit Journal" almost belong to the Provinces, though both are printed and published in Paris; but their circulation, which is enormous, is mostly a country circulation fostered by an immense variety of editions. Their influence over a wide stretch of territory is considerable. When Ernest Judet, a polemical writer of parts and prejudices, contributed leaders to the "Petit Journal," then in the height of its power, he undoubtedly turned many of his compatriots to a belief in the guilt of Dreyfus. Nowadays the same voice is heard from the tribune of the "Eclair," which has become somewhat Anglophobe, as if it wished to assume the mantle of "La Patrie," which the latter wore with such amusing, if venomous, grace of an afternoon. To-day the "Patrie" is clothed in the fine raiment of the Entente and sits among the politically just. Opinions may still affect a circulation in France, though one of the largest, viz. that of the "Journal," has been built up without any. The "Figaro" undoubtedly lost heavily for conscience sake, when it defended the victim of Devil's Isle.

The French Press has always been a personal Press as opposed to the British Press, which is impersonal. The editorial "we" and the Olympian tone have given place to the impertinent "I." Whether the change is for the better or not, it is not for me to say; at least, it seems more interesting. You know that what you read is Dupont's opinions, and you feel, when you meet Dupont, that you are shaking hands with his newspaper as well as himself. The man who looks for sound political direction

in his Paris paper will hardly find it. Ridicule is the favourite weapon of the autocrats of the breakfast table, and ridicule is never constructive. If behind the policies of French Governments, there seems to be written—especially of later years—“après moi, le déluge,” one has the same feeling in regard to the policies of Parisian editors. But this is partly due, no doubt, to the light form adopted by criticism. “Tout finit par les chansons.” The comment of the song may be caustic, but its vivacious air has probably a different effect upon the public than the graver notes of the British diapason. Nevertheless, the Press has its tremendous propaganda, and, more particularly, the advanced organs are directed by men of almost apostolic fervour. It is impossible, for instance, to doubt the sincerity of M. Jaurès.

The political tone of a French newspaper is “atmospheric.” One finds in what direction the sympathies of a paper lie in its articles and its interviews rather than in the limited space given up to professed comment. The “Matin,” for instance, which I take as the type of the modern progressive paper in France, never leaves you in doubt as to its views on the régime: they are clearly marked by the “articles de fond,” which have the strenuous democratic touch. Other articles convey to you a strong Anti-Clericalism, a hostile attitude towards the Church.

As to the influence of the Press, it would take another chapter of this length to discuss it in anything like completeness. One would have to begin by demanding: what are the requisites of a Press? Is its mission solely to instruct or merely to amuse? The French journal cannot be called the counsellor of the people so much as their chatty companion. It has always seemed to me that the Parisian reads more newspaper literature than the Londoner, but the countryman reads less than the similarly





WAITING FOR THE "PATRIE" IN THE RUE DU CROISSANT, THE FLEET STREET OF PARIS



situated Englishman. From this I judge that France is not much affected by "machine-made" opinion, since the Paris papers are probably not taken very seriously and the Provincial "confrères" are not much read. Yet it is true that a Press "campaign," conducted with venom and enough scandal to whet the appetite of readers, often plays a great part in election results. Here, again, the personal element is largely present.

The most regrettable feature of the daily Press of Paris is its sensationalism. The worst offenders are the illustrated supplements, which give ghastly pictures, none the less gruesome because imaginary, of the crimes of the week. On the score of morality, there is much to say that would be true, if it were expedient. That newspaper owners regard their properties in a different light from that obtaining in England, that there is a tendency to exploit every literary corner as if it were a gold mine with quartz to be crushed, does not affect the fact that the French journalist, individually, is an extraordinarily industrious and gifted creature, possessed of great "camaraderie" and working under high pressure for a small salary. His achievements, whether in the embellishment of a police report, or in conducting investigations into one of the numerous "affaires," which render existence in France so stimulating, are often very striking. The Paris Press, it seems to me, is an instrument of culture, as well as of enlightenment. But it has its unfavourable features: the sale of its financial column to speculators, so that the editor has no control over the advice given, and the taint of money in its "campaigns." Yet, apart from these blemishes, affecting but little the ordinary reader—since he is not aware of them—the Paris newspaper combines many of the virtues of the English system with some few—and not the least attractive—of its own.

## CHAPTER XVII

### FRENCH EDUCATION

QUITE apart from its superior organization and development, the French system of education differs essentially from the English in its complete subordination to Government control. The State is everywhere and the individual nowhere in the French educational cosmos. The State has its hand upon the *Ecole Communale* or Elementary school, upon the *Lycée* or Secondary school—to a large extent upon the Colleges or Grammar Schools—to the greatest extent upon the Universities. The Chancellor of the University of Paris is the Minister of Public Instruction, which shows how close is the connection. The present system dates practically from the Revolution. The *Ecole Communale* owes its existence to the Convention. The Government has not yet succeeded in monopolizing education. The old *Loi Falloux* still exists, which safeguards the liberty of secondary education, enabling the Church party to maintain colleges—but both they and the “free” or unprovided schools are doomed to disappear in a more or less distant future. Slowly the Government is obtaining possession of the whole educational machinery. The present proportion of Government to “free” schools is nine to one.

A considerable blow was aimed at clerical instruction when Church and State parted company after a hundred years' experience of the *Concordat*. It is true that

numbers of Church schools have converted themselves, with startling rapidity, into lay establishments—the former brother appearing in the costume of the ordinary citizen: but the struggle is unequal. Even the Church begins to realize its inability to continue the fight and is slowly falling back upon a second line of defence represented by “patronages” or clubs, where school-children are gathered each evening and on Sundays. Such institutions are inexpensively run and are made attractive to youth by amusements of all sorts. Such doctrinal teaching as may be given in classes on Sunday, or such commentary as may be uttered on the present Republic in lectures during the week, pass unchallenged since there is no Government inspection, such as checks propaganda in the schools. This abandonment of the front of the battle is due to financial difficulties of maintenance and the constant demands of the Government for a higher educational standard on the part of the teachers.

When M. Doumergue was Minister of Public Instruction in the Briand Cabinet, he brought in a Bill to ensure that every teacher in a “free” school should be furnished with a certificate of pedagogy, which is only granted by the State-controlled university. Moreover, Church schools were to submit to an inspection by Government officers and to give assurances that their staff had no connection with the unauthorized Orders. This “*projet de loi*” did not become law, but its principles will, doubtless, be embodied in future legislation.

At the same time, the attempt to force every child in the country to resort to a State school is not without its dangers. This was realized by M. Briand, who was unable to continue in office because of Anti-Clerical opposition—as I have shown elsewhere. He saw that reaction from the materialistic teaching of the schools was inevitable.



I have already mentioned the discussion which took place in the Chamber in the early days of 1910. Catholic Deputies mounted to the tribune and complained of the nature of the instruction in the schools. Absurd pains are taken to ignore the existence of the Almighty, and history is distorted to bring it into line with modern materialistic and advanced Republican thought.

This Parliamentary protest had its origin in a manifesto by the Bishops, in which they stigmatized a number of school-books as hurtful and subversive in tone. The Government was wise in adopting a conciliatory attitude. It is apparent that if a monopoly is to be established and Catholics compelled to send their children to the State schools, some agitation must be looked for. Far better, in a moral as well as a material sense—for the change involves the expenditure of millions of francs—that the laicized clerical schools should be allowed to exist side by side with the Government schools. Again, you have this consideration: how are you to have definitely religious teaching from a body of men, many of whom are admittedly "libres penseurs"? The elementary teacher in France delights in adopting the "advanced" attitude in politics as in all else.

The dominance of the State is, as I have said, the characteristic of the French system. The Department sets the pattern, which has to be strictly followed. Every Communal school is just like every other Communal school. The lycées, or secondary schools, are the exact image of one another. In this lies the vast difference of the English system. Supposing you take the secondary schools of England: Eton, Harrow, Winchester, Rugby, you find an extraordinary variety, a variety that consists in aims and objects, in the personality and influence of the master, in the degree of instruction given, in the tone

and atmosphere of the school itself, and, lastly, in the prominence given to school games. It is difficult to write in generalities of English education because the type is so varied. Yet, oddly enough, the result of this diversified education is extraordinarily similar. The men from Eton, Winchester, and Harrow present very much the same characteristics. You recognize the public-schoolboy type everywhere. The qualities, good or bad, that he has received from contact with his comrades in the classrooms, or the playing-field, and from the influence of his house-master, he carries with him wherever he goes, whether to farm in Western Canada, to grow wool in Australia or New Zealand, to hold a Government appointment in South Africa. He is profoundly impressed by his early training, and Oxford or Cambridge confirms him in the same mould.

Not so the French boy, product of the lycée. If one lycée is just like another, with superficial differences, the lycean himself is dissimilar; he has no strong bond of union with his fellows; he has little sense of solidarity. And the reason? It is not far to seek. In the great public schools of England, the scholar lives and moves and has his being in the atmosphere of the school; it is never absent from him for one minute in the twenty-four hours. He is constantly in contact with the other boys: in school hours, in the playground, at the common table, in the dormitories, in walks in and out of bounds. The school is stamped upon him. The boy is an assimilative animal, and, like the types mentioned by Darwin, takes the colour of his surroundings. A Rugbeian is dyed with the colours of Rugby, an Etonian saturated with the spirit of Eton; a Harrovian thinks as did Harrovians before him and as Harrovians will after him; there is a wonderful continuity, a wonderful "esprit de corps," a feeling that

the school is the world. There are in the universe only two types: the public-schoolman and the "other fellows"—mostly impossible.

You never get that feeling in the French lycée, because the young man goes home to bed—perhaps, also, to his meals. The greater number of lyceans are day-pupils. The pupil is constantly within range of the tender solicitude of Mama, and within sound of the sonorities of Papa. Instinctively he imbibes the politics of his parent. If the latter is a Royalist, convinced of the wickedness and futility of the Republican régime, so is he; if a Socialist—if there be such in such surroundings—so is he. He lives in conditions conducive to precocity. He does not remain a boy all of the twenty-four hours; it is doubtful if he is ever really a boy. He is born grown-up. Any spark of youth which may happen to survive the home process, is carefully extinguished by the school curriculum. He has to work four hours a day in class for six days a week; another four hours, as a minimum, are absorbed by preparation, giving a working-day of eight hours for a growing lad of fourteen. There is precious little time for recreation, for the joy of living, for good, healthy exercise at rackets or fives, cricket or football. One of the saddest spectacles is the "sixth-form" lycean bending his adolescent energies to marbles as a variant from the eternal round of classics and mathematics and natural sciences.

If he is an "interne," his condition is much worse. Most young Frenchmen look back with horror upon the years spent at boarding-school away from their mothers. If the Englishman is tempted to laugh at the Frenchman's cult of his mother, he, himself, must remember that he is regarded as a bloodless being by other nations and as largely indifferent to the ties of family. The love of mother is doubtless as strong a deterrent as any other to emigration

from the pleasant land of France. In a uniform that recalls the naval cadet or the German bandsman, the boarders at a lycée are taken for walks in the streets—a melancholy procession of overweighted youth in charge of an usher, the antithesis of the young athletic English schoolmaster. The physical side, certainly, is woefully neglected in the French system.

The boy's head is crammed with knowledge, but there is no scheme for making muscles and strong arms and legs. The youth is stuffed intellectually, like a chicken being prepared for market—the market of examinations. The curriculum is overcharged. The lycean learns too many subjects and is required to go too deeply into them for his years. At sixteen, the average French boy of the middle classes has passed his baccalaureate and knows as much as the average young Englishman of twenty-one. Yet the superiority of the French boy is dearly bought. By the time he has reached professional life, his nerves and his stomach have probably given out under the strain.

This is the reverse side of the medal. But justice must be done to a system which is marvellous in its thoroughness and completeness. It exhibits in its highest degree the logical character of the French. The proud device, "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity," blazoned on the public buildings, never received a better justification than in the educational system. It is pure democracy. That ladder that Professor Huxley wished to see set up from the gutter to the University is admirably represented in the educational scheme of our neighbours. Any boy of ability with plodding industry, can mount the ladder at very little cost to his parents. Convenient "bourses" help him at various points in his career, which may eventually land him at the top of the educational system: professor of the university, with the difficult "agrégation" to his credit.

The very perfections of the organic structure lead to imperfections, human nature (especially French) being what it is. Politics play their part, not a very large part, I am happy to say, in French education; but the still small voice of the Deputy is not excluded from the councils of those who rule over the enlightenment of the masses. "Dispenses," as they are called, are more numerous than they ought to be: youths are passed into the secondary schools who have no right to be there. Boys whose proper walk in life is carpentry, or the driving of an omnibus, are goaded by their own or their parents' ambition to prepare for liberal careers; girls, who would have been happy as dressmakers or modistes, torture their brains with the idea of becoming one day teachers in a public school. These things happen in all countries; they are the inevitable result of popular education. One may say that the underlying idea is to give the highest instruction possible to the masses, who are to exercise the franchise. It is obviously a danger to the community when the unenlightened citizen has the power of the vote.

Education has certainly taken a deeper hold of France than of England; it is more widely spread. You are immediately struck with this when in conversation with members of the working classes. They display an ability to clothe thoughts with language which is far superior to that of the same class in England. The little employé in the shops, the barber's assistant, the women who sell journals from the kiosks, or fruit and vegetables from a barrow, perpetually astonish the stranger by the aptness and intelligence of their remarks conveyed in a language that is without a taint of those vulgarities which affect the speech of the lower-class Londoner. Education at the various establishments does not leave its hall-mark on accent as in England. You do not distinguish, by the



tone and temper of his speech, the Sorbonne or Collège de France student from the ordinary man of business, for both classes speak equally well ; in England there would be a hundred inflections to guide you in your diagnosis of the intellectual origin of the speaker. Education is diffused in France.

Classics are taught on a rational system in the secondary schools. Precious years are not lost in acquiring the rudiments and refinements of a dead tongue. Greek and Latin are recognized as dead in France, whilst in England they are always being resuscitated by painful methods. The young man can obtain his baccalaureate with a minimum of Greek and Latin ; it is even possible to escape them altogether. But that does not mean that he will be ignorant of the great classic works of antiquity ; on the contrary, he will probably have a fuller sense of their beauties than many an English schoolboy who has spent years in learning syntax and in a futile attempt to turn out Greek and Latin verse. The French boy learns by translations.

Yet Hellenic studies are as deeply pursued in France by an élite as they are in England, where they have become the synonym of a liberal education. French versions often show a scholarship unsurpassed by any efforts of Oxford. One result of restricted numbers in Greek is the development of a higher standard and of greater enthusiasm for study. Yet the trend of all education in France is practical. The bulk of a boy's school hours is passed in the society of moderns. The history of other countries and times is only employed to throw light upon his own. It is impossible for him to leave school without a considerable knowledge of the principal happenings of his own epoch. The same cannot be said of the ordinary English public-schoolboy. The French boy will have, also, a large acquaintance with science.

The educational ideals pursued in the two countries present a great contrast. A wide channel separates the two systems. "A nation of pure intellect," Meredith called the French, and nothing could be more intellectual than their conception of education. In England, the formation of character plays so large a part that we are in danger of forgetting the importance of developing the reasoning faculties. I have pointed out that the materialistic teaching in French schools has provoked a revolt amongst parents, who realize that education is not mere book-knowledge. This class deplures, not simply the absence of religious instruction, but of all ideals of an altruistic character. Boys and girls of the present generation are given little moral impulse towards the perfect citizenship. That side is neglected. Patriotism and chivalry, Divine justice, and the beauty of good deeds, are not sufficiently insisted upon by masters in the elementary schools, who show a perverse tendency to warp every generous theme to their own agnostic and cynical ideas. The body of teachers in France, though it contains many noble men and women, is curiously inclined to adopt a pose which appears to be based on the mischievous propaganda of Socialist and Anti-Militarist demagogues.

There is, to-day, a reaction against this undue stimulus of the intellectual faculties at the expense of physical culture. A sensible effort has been made, during the last few years, to copy the English system, whereby a boy shall have broad shoulders and a straight back and a robust constitution as well as the necessary mental qualifications for a liberal career. In some of the lycées in Paris, notably the Lycée Janson, an attempt is made to inculcate a sporting spirit in the boys and give them games. Schools, also, have been established, like the Collège de Normandie, right in the country, where the pupils have

instilled into them an "esprit de corps" and a British love of fair play. This is accompanied by a close and fraternal surveillance by the masters, who have in mind the moral and corporeal, as well as the purely intellectual, needs of the boy. An excellent beginning has been made. If the movement does not go faster, it is due to two reasons: first, the fear that the boy will not be successful in his examination if he spends a reasonable time in the playing-field; and secondly, the horror of French mothers that their darlings should hurt themselves in rough games. Both these prejudices are being overcome. It has been discovered that the boy of robust health is better qualified than his sickly brother to stand the strain of the examination halls; and, secondly, the French mother is learning to be as proud of her son's prowess in the playing-field as she was formerly when he carried away a stack of books at the prize distribution. As I mention in "Social Influences," the renaissance of sport is a remarkable symptom of twentieth-century development. Everywhere in the neighbourhood of Paris, where open space is available, boys play football, and teams of young Frenchmen are slowly working up to a first-class position under both Rugby and Association rules. Nor is the movement confined to Paris; it has extended to the Provinces. Bordeaux has an excellent football team.

The fact that the Government holds the education of the country in its hands, makes the career of teaching a Civil Service, and the schoolmaster a Civil servant. The "écoles normales," or Training Colleges, constitute a remarkable system, whereby the teaching profession (both for men and women) is recruited in France for the secondary and elementary schools. The highest educational title to which a young man or woman can aspire is the "agrégation." It is an extremely difficult examination, comparable

with a professorship at Oxford and Cambridge; it is, moreover, competitive. The number passed each year is strictly limited to the number of vacancies existing in the State schools. It is in the interest of the Government not to cheapen this qualification, so as to allow the possessors of it to teach in the rival "free" schools. Thus, the latter are handicapped by having a lower educational stratum to choose from, even supposing their financial resources warrant them in engaging the highest teaching talent.

The baccalaureate is the main-door to every professional and university distinction. Yet the university is not regarded as the crowning point as it is in England. Having attained his baccalaureate, the young man usually passes on to his professional schools, unless he is destined for the Law, or for a professorship. After the baccalaureate, comes the "licence," an intermediate degree comparable with Moderations at Oxford, but the standard is equivalent to a full degree. This obstacle having been surmounted, the student selects the subject in which he intends to specialize: history, mathematics, philosophy, classics, or natural science. Unless he aims at one of the highest posts in the educational world, he generally limits his ambition to the doctorate, which is the next step after the "licence." The "doctorat" implies a thesis, which may be an original and brilliant study, or a plain "réchauffé" of other people's theories.

The schools are the great nursery for men of letters, and for, indeed, every public career in France. Taine, Sarcey, and About, to cite only three cases, were schoolmasters before they entered literature; Parliamentarians are frequently recruited from this "milieu." The democratization of education is seen in the higher ranks. Professors come frequently from the "écoles primaires," having worked

their way up with practically no home advantages. The chief ornaments of the teaching profession at the Sorbonne, for instance, are men of the humblest origin, who have conquered every step of the way by indomitable perseverance. Culture in the Oxonian sense, they have not at all ; learning, they possess to a much higher degree than their English and American "confrères." It is significant that when Frenchmen arrive at a professoriate they are not content to write text-books for youths of eighteen, as the leisurely Dons of Oxford and Cambridge are prone to do, but contribute learned treatises on their subjects which represent research and are of European value.

The French educational edifice has been constructed of grey matter, independent of moral fibre. It is too exclusively intellectual. There is no space for other considerations in the modern curriculum. Some notions of conduct are inculcated in the primary schools—the exact quality varies considerably—but in the secondary schools there is, admittedly, no effort made in this direction. The splendid, vigorous, wholesome comradeship of the English universities, as represented by Oxford and Cambridge, is largely lacking from the universities of France. In the dozen or more universities that exist in Paris and the provincial centres, there is no system of residence in vogue. The students live how and where they like, merely attending classes at fixed hours in the university buildings, and passing various oral and written examinations. Beyond that, they are entirely without the scope of university influence and discipline, save in the case where their conduct brings them directly within the purview of the law. At heart your French student is a "frondeur." His training, from his earliest infancy, makes him a confirmed individualist ; hence it would be difficult, nay, impossible, to establish a system analogous to that of the old English



universities. The Sorbonne has, of course, its traditions, traditions that reach back to the Middle Ages, to a period anterior to that of our oldest University; but the other great teaching centres are, with few exceptions, of modern creation. No; any adoption of the English system, by which I mean the Oxford and Cambridge system, is out of the question. Nor would it be advisable. The French understand their needs, and are no doubt fulfilling them. At the same time, reform might, with advantage, take place, both in reducing the time-table of the schools to reasonable limits, and in devoting a large portion of the school hours to moral culture. In the playground, attention should certainly be given to physical education; hygienic surroundings, too, should be insisted upon for the schools.

It must not be assumed that no movement of the sort is going on. Here and in preceding chapters I have already touched upon the development of sport; the good influence of it has spread to the schools. A great advance has been made during the past thirty or forty years. Lycées, to which a former generation went, resembled barracks in their cast-iron regulations, in the monotony of the food and in the infrequency of baths. In a recent book of memoirs, the writer speaks of the monthly bath at the Lycée being the regular institution in the latter days of the Empire. Even now, the bathing accommodation is extremely defective in Paris and provincial lycées. Doubtless, also, the defects of the table contributed to the anæmia and non-chalance of the lads. Yet it is only too true that many English schools are sadly wanting in this respect. These things are being slowly rectified, but the lycée in its inward and, often, in its outward aspect, is an unlovely institution, not at all comparable with the splendid colleges in England, where, in pleasant surroundings, the well-to-do youth of

the nation imbibe learning mitigated by healthful hours in umbrageous playing-fields. Nor can serious amelioration of the condition of the French boy be looked for until his schools have been moved bodily out into the country. For the moment, the lycées are situated in the middle of towns, where it is impossible to get either good air or playground accommodation.

There is a certain difference between the lycée and the collège. The colleges, of which the most noted are the Chaptal and Rollin in Paris, are municipal institutions, subject to a more or less active State control. The funds are furnished by the municipality, but the teaching has to bear the Government stamp. The two elements clash a little in the administration of these institutions, for the municipality of Paris has a trick of being a little in advance of or a little behind the Government hour. The *Ædiles* are either too Socialistic or too Nationalist for the Cabinet, which represents the Republican mean. These colleges give an instruction differing, somewhat, from that of the lycée, and resembling the English grammar school. They are destined chiefly for boys who are going into mercantile occupations and have no need of the advanced studies of the lycées, which coach for the high professional schools. The modern, as opposed to the classical side, is largely developed in a college; indeed, one may say that the modern side "has it" in French educational establishments of the present day. The tendency is to become more and more modern and utilitarian, relying less on those great instruments of civilization and polish, Greek and Latin. But here, again, a reaction is visible.

Reference to the preparation by the lycées for the professional schools brings us to a cursory survey of these establishments. The first, and the most popular, is the *Ecole Polytechnique*. It is destined to furnish the State

with civil and military engineers, and it succeeds admirably. It is a distinctively military academy, having at its head a general. The students are under military discipline and wear a military uniform. The studies are very advanced. The college practically dates from Revolutionary times and has always had a Revolutionary bias. It has taken part in all the popular movements of the past hundred years, and has, in consequence, endeared itself to the people of Paris, who are, traditionally, "agin' the Government." Napoleon flattered the school by placing it at the head of his army on parade days, but this did not win its loyalty or affection ; it was on the side of the barricade, though it took no part in the Commune. On the other hand, the conduct of Polytechnicians was splendid during the siege of Paris. They took their place in the trenches, and, on occasion, assumed command. The course is two years at this school, and the finished cadet furnishes the best engineering brains in France. Another military school, almost as noted, is St. Cyr. Its uniform is one of the most familiar in the streets of Paris. The brilliant blue tunic and red trousers, with broad blue stripe, are completed by a cap with cock's feathers. On leaving the school, cadets are appointed to commissions in the cavalry and foot regiments. The Two Years' Service Law has operated certain changes in these schools. Each candidate is now required to serve one year with the colours, before entering upon his two years' course of study in the school. Under the former régime, he was exempted from service under arms. The innovation will probably not hurt either the physique or the general character of St. Cyr and the Polytechnique.

The "Ecole Centrale des Arts et Manufactures" shares with the Polytechnique the distinction of being the nursery of engineers ; there are other famous schools such as the "Ponts et Chaussées" and the "Ecole des Mines," which

indicate their missions in their titles. The "Ecole des Sciences Politiques" needs, also, no detailed description. It is intended for young diplomats and is of private foundation.

I suppose one of the best known to foreigners is the "Ecole des Beaux Arts," which attracts so many student painters, sculptors, and architects from all over the world. A wonderful training is given within its walls; its highest prize, the famous Prix de Rome, carries with it the right of residence for study at the Villa Medici in the Eternal City. The Government keeps up several schools of this sort, one at Athens and one at Cairo for the study of archæology.

Technical education dovetails into the primary schools with scientific nicety. It is splendidly organized in France, and a network of schools abound for the teaching of arts and crafts; they are generally under mixed State and municipal auspices. No young man of energy or aptitude need be without specialized instruction. The French system offers a striking contrast with that of England, where technical education is haphazard and sterile. There is, however, an improvement to be noted during the past few years; but we are still hopelessly in the rear compared either with France or Germany.

One reason why the French youth pressed forward in his educational course was his desire to profit by the shortened period of military service open to those who satisfied the examiners in the baccalaureate. This exemption no longer exists, since the Two Years' Law now requires that term of service from every male citizen of France. Hence, this is a reason the more for loosening the bond of education, besides the reaction against an over-intellectuality which I have noted above. The probability is that young men, having nothing to gain from passing their degrees before the age of military service, will con-

tent themselves with less scholastic absorption and devote themselves to games and outdoor sports, thus increasing the vigour and health of the community. This is a consummation devoutly to be wished. One may remark that the expulsion of the Jesuits has led many parents to send to England boys who formerly attended schools conducted by the Orders or Congregations. One of the most fashionable of the non-Governmental colleges is the Collège Stanislas, whence issued M. Edmond Rostand and other distinguished pupils.

A fruitful source of discussion would be provided by the inquiry whether non-religious teaching in the schools is really responsible for the juvenile depravity that appears to exist in France at this moment. Subjects of this sort must be treated on broad lines, in no narrow, party spirit. One must frankly admit (as I insist in the chapter on Clericalism) that the Church has lost its proud position, that quite half the population shows an indifference, if not hostility, to Catholic tenets, and that the whole country is evolving in some direction towards a new order of morality and of social existence. It would be presumptuous for any writer to attempt to prove that non-sectarian teaching, such as has existed in the schools for the last forty years, has really succeeded in lowering the standard of morality in the people, or rather, has taken all sense of the ideal from the younger generation. This I do not believe to be the case. I think that the degeneration, which is noticeable, is to be attributed to other causes. One of these causes is the prosperity of France at the present moment—a collective prosperity unequalled by any other country. I use the word “collective” because, whilst other nations possess more classes of citizens enjoying greater fortunes than the richest men in France, there is no country in the world where wealth is more evenly distributed. With this



wealth has grown up a taste for luxury, hitherto unknown, and a desire for more wealth. There is a worship of money, which robs the youth of the country of nobler aspirations, and is the cause of many of the revolting crimes which have stained the pages of French history during the last few years. It is, at least, peculiar that many of the men who have received a clerical instruction have turned from the Faith of their fathers to Free Thought. Hence it would seem that religious instruction is not always a safeguard in after life.

In conclusion, one may ask whether, in giving to education its utmost logical development, the French have not left out, by a grievous oversight, the ethical side—those delicate, elusive elements from the crucible, which give richness and harmony to the whole.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE FRENCH JUDICIAL SYSTEM

**N**OTHING could be more typical of the French character than the judicial system. The Judge is not the serene and impartial creature which English law and custom have made him, but acts with a petulance and an apparent eagerness to convict that amaze the foreigner habituated to Anglo-Saxon methods. It has been often remarked that the Judge of an Assize Court is practically a prosecuting attorney searching to obtain results, plying the wretched prisoner with question after question until he has secured condemnation out of the victim's own mouth. Moreover, he often shows prejudices of an extraordinary kind and exercises Satanic ingenuity in discovering weak places in the prisoner's defence.

There is, however, some logical and scientific basis for the French system, or it would never have been adopted. Napoleon, who knew the weaknesses of the French better than any man, gave them their Criminal Code, as well as most of the institutions they now possess. And that Criminal Code is especially framed to meet the exigencies of daily existence in France. The great Emperor saw that he could not allow too large a liberty to the prisoner to defend himself by the silent system adopted in England. He saw that the Latin temperament required special treatment, and that the accused must be goaded on, by a succession of intellectual pin-pricks, to confess

his guilt. Nor is false swearing regarded as the heinous offence that it is in England. Thus, discrepancy of statement does not weigh as heavily against the prisoner as in English Courts, where lying is held in especial abhorrence by judge and jury.

The licence given to witnesses is, also, quite contrary to Anglo-Saxon tradition. If the neighbour has a grudge against the wretched creature in the criminal's dock, he has every opportunity of indulging it by uttering innuendoes and the most damning "*obiter dicta*." Rarely the judge stops him from gratifying his spite to the fullest extent. "*Ex-parte*" statements of the most extravagant sort pass unchallenged in the mouth of a venomous witness who, in ten minutes, has raked up enough about the prisoner's antecedents to guillotine half a dozen people.

I have said that a logical and scientific basis exists for all this. That basis is the desire of the judicature to create an atmosphere about the prisoner. His aura is examined with the enthusiasm of a student of the occult. Is it a bad aura or a good one? These investigations, these minute questions of ancestry, atavism, early proclivities and the rest, will tell us. We shall get a complete picture of the man. But, like many things admirable in theory, the system is odious in practice. It surrounds the prisoner, certainly, with an atmosphere, but it is generally unfavourable—an atmosphere charged with prejudice, an atmosphere created by the malevolence of neighbours. Every tiny act in a man's life is construed and magnified into something contributing to his present state of mind. Imagine the cruelty of questioning the prisoner about some trivial action which exposed him to prosecution some fifteen or twenty years before! It is possible he was not guilty, but it makes no difference. The horrid fact that he was brought to court, though unjustly, is now

dragged into the light of day and blackened according to the fancy of the prosecution. In a recent sensational murder trial the judge was careful to elicit the damning fact, in his examination of the prisoner, that, at the tender age of four, she told lies. The "atmosphere" begins early and leaves off late.

Then, again, there is the terrible system known as "the reconstitution of the scene." "The play's the thing, Wherein to catch the conscience of the King." That is the principle upon which the investigating magistrate acts. It is one of the chief planks in the institution known as "instruction." The prisoner is led to the place of the crime; he is shown the bed upon which the victim reposed, and then policemen or lay figures represent that victim, and the horrid drama of the supposed crime is carried out before the eyes of the accused. His demeanour is closely watched during this ordeal. If he blanches or seems to give himself away by an hysterical breakdown or involuntary exclamation, it is recorded against him and used with great effect by the judge at the Assize Court. This is a survival of the medieval torture chamber, only mitigated by the fact that, if the "juge d'instruction" plays with his client as a cat does a mouse, the mouse is allowed to be very cheeky. Under a recent law, the magistrate cannot hold a tête-à-tête with the prisoner without the presence of counsel. This is excellent in principle, and was the result of agitation against the secret system. At the same time, many authorities regret the alteration. A well-known "chef de la Sûreté," M. Goron, explained to me that this employment of counsel at the earlier stages of the inquiry blocked the process of investigation and thwarted the ends of justice. Under the old system, the prisoner, unattended by a legal adviser, was tempted to betray himself; he grew expansive. But,

nowadays, even his communications with the gendarmes who arrested him were restrained by the thought that he need confess nothing at all, and that he would be defended at the very outset. This might be very well for the Anglo-Saxon temperament, observed M. Goron, but the results had not been good in France. It is not, as a rule, advisable for any country of settled civilization to import its judicial system.

Be that as it may, convictions become increasingly difficult to obtain, the prisoner finding loopholes in the laws of which he was formerly ignorant. The change is due, no doubt, to the ingenuity of counsel. The eloquence of the lawyer has bigger scope in a French court than in an English, though American counsel have, apparently, very much the same latitude. French barristers are like actors in the freedom of their gestures and in the force and vigour of their language. They make direct appeal to the feelings of the jury. "Ah, messieurs, this young man has a mother who is waiting, with tear-stained face and choking sobs, the result of your verdict. Do you mean to say you are going to send him to the guillotine or to expatriate him for the rest of his natural life to the torrid climate of Cayenne? Consider the sufferings of the mother, Messieurs les Jurés! Imagine what your own mother would feel were you sentenced for a crime you did not commit!"

He continues in this strain until, under the stimulus of emotion, the jury break down and weep. This is the lawyer's golden opportunity. "Gentlemen, you weep," he says, pointing with triumphant finger; "this is a startling proof of the innocence of my client. Would your hearts be touched by the defence of a rogue? Never. Then you must acquit the prisoner at the bar."

Reasoning of this sort, in the royal manner of Buzfuz,



is effective with French juries, who love the appeal to the emotional side and a theatrical display of forensic eloquence. The most hardened criminal can, apparently, escape if he is fortunate enough to engage a man of the oratorical ability of, say, Maitre Henri Robert, of the Paris Bar, a most ingenious pleader, and master of all the arts of rhetoric. There is, however, a point at which this sort of thing becomes dangerous, and when the arm of the law is weakened and the wrong-doer goes unpunished. A great deal of the recrudescence of crime in the large cities in France is due to the pusillanimity of the magistrates, who often fail to convict, when the evidence is conclusive. It is difficult to explain such deplorable leniency; possibly politics have something to do with it. It is notorious that the Apache, or disreputable character, caught by the police in suspicious circumstances, often produces a workman's card identifying him with a professional syndicate. It is, also, a fact that some of the most hardened law-breakers are useful to the politicians in much the same way that the "ward-heelers" are to the Tammany organization. Whatever the reason, there has been an outbreak of lawlessness which has caused alarm in France.

To this circumstance is partly due the restoration of the guillotine, which has been kept busy since its installation and has supplied the newspapers with gory and ghastly details. In my prefatory remarks, I mention that the Revolutionary taste for blood has descended to the present generation. Is not the eagerness, with which the guillotine was again set up, symptomatic? The lust to kill has broken out again in the French people. Whether we see in that cry for capital punishment a reversion to the type of '89, a return to the strong appetites of the "tricoteuses," at any rate, the sinister "Widow" is

again invoked to check the sanguinary impulses of the younger generation, and Parliament and the Press have united to thrust out of life those who appear so unworthy to enjoy it. Yet the "étalage" that results, the pandering to gruesome appetites, the morbid literature that has been inspired are certainly set-backs to any advantages that may accrue from the public beheading of the assassin. And he, himself, dies, the poor wretch, not in the odour of sanctity, but with the gloriole of a public parade. In his imagination, he is a great performer on the world's stage, a hero playing with his own life for a few intoxicating moments of notoriety.

It may be asked why the French authorities do not adopt secret executions such as exist in England and America. The reason is simple. The French crowd is suspicious and would never believe, unless it saw with its own eyes, that the culprit had paid the death penalty. It would always suppose that there had been secret influences at work to secure the man's escape and that, at the last moment, he had been got safely out of the way while some mock execution took place. Overweening confidence in his rulers is certainly not part of the mental make-up of the modern Frenchman.

We have spoken of the drawbacks of the French system: the semi-secret and searching character of the preliminary investigation, and the cruelty of the judge's examination of the prisoner. We have less hesitation in mentioning these things because they have been the subject of much comment by the French, who have set their hands to the work of modification and reform. Some judges now abstain from the "interrogatoire," and there is a tendency to repress it altogether. In the same way, the preliminary stages of "instruction" are undergoing improvement, though it is still possible for an innocent man to be locked

up and kept for weeks without proper trial. In the place thereof is trial by newspaper, if the crime alleged is sufficiently sensational to attract the notice of the Press. I have been present at the strangest scenes in which journalists attached to French newspapers have screamed remarks over the head of the investigating magistrate at the accused, though, by some pure piece of technicality, they were actually excluded from the room in which the supposed secret interrogation was going on.

The presumed purpose and original intention of the "instruction" was quite proper. It was a private inquiry, discreetly carried out by the police, to determine whether a person should be formally constituted a prisoner and should or should not take his trial before an Assize Court. But, nowadays, it is practically an informal trial of the person in which every fact adduced, or supposed to be adduced, is set forth in the most glowing language in the Boulevard organs. The custom is for a short résumé of the day's proceedings to be handed to the Press for publication—that is the regular method—but modern newspaper enterprise has transformed it into something quite different. It is now an embroidered and perfumed story extended to many columns, in which the case is tried in advance and the prisoner guillotined by proxy.

There is a law of libel in France, though the casual reader of the ephemeral Press may be excused for not knowing it. It is rarely invoked, and, when it is, the fine imposed is tantamount to a sanction. A noteworthy exception is the verdict in the case of a former Minister of Justice, who haled his editorial traducer before the tribunal and secured substantial damages. Since that time, the newspaper concerned is more restrained in its comments on men and things. It is in danger of becoming prosaic!

Whilst a strong libel law is a security to innocence, it is also a shelter to the wrong-doer, who fears an "exposé" more than any of the other results of a judicial investigation. Considering the great services rendered by the Press of England in the administration of the laws and the tracking of fugitives from justice, legislation is outrageously unjust towards the journalist, particularly in such a matter as contempt of court. The law of libel has not changed with the changing spirit and necessities of the time. One wonders what would happen if judges ran newspapers. Would there be any "news"? Let every organ of information be an adjunct of the judicature! The great advantage of the system of free comment in France is that nothing is hid. Imagine the enormous difficulties of reopening a Dreyfus case in England. The "chose jugée" is a sacred thing. Scandals arise with amazing frequency in France, but one of the reasons is the ambition of the Press to tell everything. There is thus a bad side of censorship, just as there is a good side of reticence.

Whilst British judges prevent undue revelations, so the British jury turns an adamant face towards the "crime passionnel," though I observe some modification of this demeanour. The man who kills his wife in a fit of jealous rage gets short shrift. "Did he kill the woman?" the jury asks, and, if the reply is in the affirmative, there is hardly likely to be any recommendation to the judge.

Henri Rochefort recounted to me his pained surprise at finding a man in England (during his exile there) condemned to death for the murder of his wife and her lover under peculiar provocation. He had come out of prison for a trivial offence to discover that his spouse had left the house, and taken his belongings. Coming upon her, shortly afterwards, accompanied by a man, he killed them both and was hanged for it. To a Frenchman of the old

school, such as Henri Rochefort, the judicial dénouement is revolting in its cruelty.

I am not prepared to say that the jury was not right in its verdict—society must be protected, whatever the grievances of the slayer—but the avenger had poetic justice on his side. In France, there would have been no conviction on the capital charge, but a whittling down of the crime to one of justifiable homicide. Thus, differences in mental organization are seen as plainly in courts as in plays and books.

With all its defects, the French system rarely, I think, convicts the wrong person. Some merciful Providence intervenes to save the victim from an unmerited fate. Often it is the other way and the criminal escapes, owing to an excess of sentiment or because some agitation is raised and a Press campaign affects the popular judgment.

Closely woven with the judicial system is the system of police and crime detection. Here, again, special methods are employed, which do not always square with the British notions of fair play. Gaboriau imagined and Vidocq played in real life the detective of a different stamp from Sherlock Holmes, whose exploits are already famous in France. M. Hamard, the present head of the Sûreté in Paris (1911), is as able as any in unearthing crime, though I doubt if he has equalled the amazing penetration of Gaston Leroux's "Rouletabille"—even more wonderful than Conan Doyle's hero—in the "Mystery of the Yellow Room." But the police "en chair et os" complain that their efficiency is marred by the "humanitarianism" of the magistrates. Part of the growth of Apachedom is traceable to this cause. The young ruffian goes unpunished. Judicial authorities have awakened to the faults of the Bench and have addressed a circular of remonstrance to the magistrates urging severer sentences



for the unlawful use of arms, and, particularly, for "souteneurs," who profit pecuniarily by vice. Notwithstanding the fascinating personality of Faux Col, Maude Annesley's picturesque Apache, who hypnotized the English artist, Gonda Bryne, the creature is rarely attractive, either physically or on romantic grounds, and the fact that he so often lives on prostitution robs him even of the perverted glory that belongs to personal risk in pursuit of crime.

Yet, the problem is difficult to handle, going deep into the root of things. The Apache is the product of his time and its peculiar evils. One of the greatest is the suppression of the apprentice system, caused largely by social laws prohibiting the employment of young persons (as well as women) after certain hours. There results a derangement of business methods, and the determination of the manufacturer to employ only adult male labour. Another reason is equally as important. Frenchwomen work to an extent unknown in England. The wife of every small employé contributes, by her own earnings, to the family purse. Hence, there is little home life for the child. On his return from school, he is driven into the streets by the mere fact of the absence of the parents. He forms habits and tastes, which incline him, in later years, to the excitements of low life rather than to the drab monotony of an honest, working existence.

Again, there is the cosmopolitan character of Paris. Its brilliance and variety attract the leisured classes of every nation. Industries are created, catering especially for pleasure. There is a display of wealth and extravagance, which offers peculiar temptation to the young. The feeling that luxury is the "summum bonum" and that its attainment represents the only ambition worth while is responsible for much moral disaster. Social

problems are inextricably bound up with the problem of juvenile criminality. Whilst police measures have effected a great deal, they cannot effect everything. One of the most successful reforms is the institution of the cyclist police, which has given greater security to the outlying parts of Paris. But the mere repression of crime will not create good citizens, neither will the imposition of corporal punishment, such as friendly foreigners advise. It is singular that, whilst the French possess an almost morbid liking for the guillotine, they will stand no allusion to the flogging of the Apache, though the system stamped out the garrotter in England. It is a return to barbarism, they say, a reactionary proposal only fit for the Dark Ages.

The abolition of the apprenticeship system has, doubtless, had a deplorable effect upon young Parisians of modest family. Industrial employment brings discipline and self-restraint, and the absence of it temptation and crime. A curious proof of severe training upon the morals is furnished by America, where the intensely organized industrial system grinds the erratic individualism of the "spoilt" child to powder and substitutes a common efficiency and subservience of self to ends comparable with results obtained by German military methods. Freedom, accompanied by inexperience and the mere desire "to live," is always dangerous.

As I explained above, employers refrain from taking apprentices for fear of the restrictions imposed by social legislation, copied from England, which affects women and children. For this reason, feminine reformers object to Parliamentary interference, in their interests, alleging that their freedom to make contracts should be as great as man's. It is one of the ironies of well-intentioned effort that the reformer often hurts more than he benefits.

The attitude of the law towards women is different in

the two countries. You have to render account of the susceptibility of juries and even of the judges—not entirely unknown on the other side of the Channel. Portia, if she happens to be pretty, has a powerful argument in her favour. French gallantry, in and out of the courts, is scarcely proof against beauty in distress. The charming actress who, in England, earned this rebuke from the judge: "Madam, you may cross-examine the witnesses, including your own, you may even cross-examine the learned counsel, but you positively must not cross-examine me," would be otherwise received in France.

Temperament enters into the general conception of the rôle and scope of justice. In French procedure, there seems ever the loophole, the chance of escape, the "way round." Juries are more prone to take the purely human, as opposed to the judicial, view. They are touched by considerations which leave the British juror cold. They understand the frailty of flesh, the pressure of circumstance and environment. They realize that there are temptations almost impossible to resist. And they make allowances—sometimes too great allowances. They are apt to be swayed by the extraneous to the neglect of the principle. The experiment of working-men jurors (instituted by a Socialist Minister of Justice) has not been as unhappy as might be supposed. On the contrary, corduroy, elevated, temporarily, to magisterial functions, has sometimes exhibited a sturdier sense of right and wrong than his "confrères" in the higher social scale.

Yet harm is done by the glib tongue of counsel, which is able to prove that black is white—if not green or yellow. A contemporary example may serve. A cab-driver was arraigned in the Assize Court of the Department of the Seine for the murder of a messenger

boy. The youth had remonstrated with him for trying to cheat his fare. The "cocher" drove away, but returned later and felled the lad with an iron club, inflicting injuries from which he died. For this aggravation of the crime, the accused was sentenced to a short term of imprisonment with "sursis," that is to say, he benefited from the First Offenders Act. The folly of the Courts in condoning offences has an evil effect upon the preservation of order in the street. The anarchy of the drivers of wheeled traffic in Paris is as dangerous to the public as the nocturnal attacks of the Apaches.

Justice (with the aid of the jury) is too open to the appeal to mercy, if that appeal has any sentimental basis. The woman who feels herself wronged by her lover and throws vitriol in his face, escapes with light punishment; in the same way, the man who shoots the domestic interloper and then turns the weapon upon his wife, is generally exonerated. Whilst this is, doubtless, a human interpretation of the law, it sets up a principle hurtful to society.

A country's laws are a tangled knot of traditions and conditions. It is impossible for a Frenchman to regard, with the same eyes as an Anglo-Saxon, offences against morality and the commonweal. His upbringing is different; his ideals respond to other standards. Generous motives may impel him to erect an ethical code which, though admirable in its general aspect—judged academically—fails, miserably, when tried by the touch-stone of experience.

Liberty can never be dissociated from jurisprudence. Notwithstanding the loud call for this privilege and its proud emblazonment on all public monuments, it is indisputable that in England the personal liberty of the subject is more assured. A man is freer from arrest. We have the Habeas Corpus Act, which requires the prisoner

to be brought before a magistrate within a few hours of his incarceration, whereas, in France, he may languish for months in prison, before facing a judge in open court. The system of "instruction," being, at least, nominally secret, permits of abuses scarcely possible in England, where the proceedings, from the first moment of arrest, are open and subject to control. There is an old song which says that the prisoner is breaking his heart in prison, where he has been six months, whilst M. le Juge d'Instruction is away at the seaside enjoying a vacation.

"Instruction," however foreign to the English idea, has, none the less, certain warrant for existence. It expresses the psychic differences of two peoples. Without powers of arrest, under the preventative laws, it would be impossible to stop movements of a dangerous tendency in France, in time of popular excitement. The first duty of authority is to calm the effervescence by locking up the agitators. During the remarkable revolutionary strikes of the railway servants in October, 1910, the principle was in operation. Not only were the ringleaders arrested, but the police paid domiciliary visits and seized compromising papers of journalists engaged on Anarchist organs. The wide latitude given to authority is extremely useful on such occasions. Without the close connection of the Government with the Judicature, judges would be powerless. I do not wish to suggest that politics destroys impartiality, but I do say that the French judge has not that independence of the Parliamentary Majority which is the proud possession of his British brother. The best paid French judge gets not more than £1,200: the salary of the First President of the Court of Cassation. His colleagues, who preside over each Chamber of the Court, receive £1,000, which is also the stipend of the First President of the Court of Appeal. It is only necessary to



compare these figures with the salaries of the judicature in England to be aware, at once, of the disparity of treatment of the two bodies. In England, the Stipendiary of a police court obtains as large a remuneration as the highest judicial talent in France. There is no Lord Chief Justice, as in the English system, drawing his £8,000 a year—a figure, somewhat out of proportion, perhaps, with the necessities of the case—and the Lord Chancellor is merely the Minister of Justice drawing the ordinary Cabinet pay of 60,000 francs. In the Courts, the State is represented by the Public Prosecutor (*Procureur Général*), who receives as much as the Presiding Judge in the Courts of Cassation and Appeal. There is also the *Avocat-Général*, a lower salaried official who conducts prosecutions in the absence of his chief.

Perhaps the most curious institution is the “*partie civile*.” This is the private person who is always joined, in the capacity of the civil plaintiff, to any criminal prosecution. Thus, the wife or parents of a murdered man are the “*partie civile*” in a criminal action against the murderer. The claim is for damages caused by the death of the victim.

It has already been shown that the Judge does not enjoy the authority that belongs to the head of a British tribunal. He is the President who presides with scarcely more than half the prestige and power of real control which pertain to our own settled system. The President is Napoleonic in his origin—a hectoring but rather futile creature, who hardly restrains counsel from their theatrical excesses, and who has no power to alter what is already prescribed by the law with such meticulous exactitude. The rigidity of the Code is one of its leading characteristics. It cannot be deflected either in the sense of mercy or of increasing punishment; it must be applied in its

integrity or not at all. Here, again, is a reason, possibly, why juries err on the side of leniency. They know that if they return a verdict of "Guilty," without extenuating circumstances, the full penalty of the Code will be administered, whereas, probably, they themselves see the necessity for more humane treatment of the case. Roughly, it may be said that the English magistrate or judge is a gentleman of high private character, considerable social standing and experience of life, who gives out fatherly advice to his fellow-citizens and is handsomely rewarded for taking a disinterested care of their morals. The want of codified theory in England is as remarkable as the system is excellent in practice. We live under a régime of case-law; the crime of to-day is judged by the precedent of yesterday. This may, or may not, be good in principle—personally, I doubt it—but the results are satisfactory. The desideratum is even-handed justice and this emerges, naturally, from the innate sense of fairness existing in lawyers as well as in other Englishmen.

Eugène Brioux's "Robe Rouge" exhibits, scathingly, the zeal of magistrates to secure convictions for the sake of promotion. It is an exaggerated piece of special pleading; at the same time, there seems to exist, sometimes, a terrible ambition amongst judges and the Bar to advance over the bodies of prisoners, guilty or innocent. Happily, the symptoms of this ferocious "arrivisme" are rarer in England, though, here, the abuse is the latitude allowed counsel to browbeat witnesses. Distinction in science or letters or undistinguished honesty is no palladium in the witness box. Every one is fair game for the gentlemen in wig and gown.

Comparison between two sharply contrasting schemes is inevitable in a survey of French justice, for without this invidious process, points are lost to the English reader.

Superficially there is everything to condemn in the French system and little to commend. On the strength of newspaper reports of the famous Steinheil trial, editorial writers hastened to prescribe the English law-court as a remedy for all ills. But reformation is not as easy as that. It must conform with the genius of the people. It would be absurd to pretend that French judicial methods are not capable of great improvement ; at the same time, any adoption of foreign ideas must be made with caution ; otherwise, you will incur the risk that results from pouring new wine into old and Biblical bottles.

Lastly, there is the question of witnesses on oath. In England it is a dreadful crime to bear false witness, to be guilty of perjury. But, in France, the spoken word is more lightly regarded, and witnesses forswear and express purposeful ambiguities with a lightness of heart that would appear atrocious to the conductors of a case in England. But it must be remembered that the legal hearers of evidence of the sort are well aware of the temperamental eccentricities of their countrymen and make due allowance in the rendering of the verdict. Evidence, in fact, has to be carefully controlled and directly challenged before it carries weight. Indeed, one may say that the great difference in the judicial systems of the two countries is that in France the endeavour is to know the inward man and build about him probabilities and possibilities, whilst, in England, the machinery of the Courts is turned to discover whether on a certain day the prisoner committed a certain act and whether the fact of that act can be explicitly established. The difference is essential. The one is sharp, decisive, positive, the other is atmospheric, general, psychological. I blame or praise neither system ; I find them both good of their sort, both adapted (or capable of adaptation) to the needs of the people. But the French system has been

warped in the course of years. Again, the nature of the French is less judicial, less impartial than the English. When they learn these virtues, as they are gradually learning them, by contact with the Anglo-Saxon and from playing his games, then, I think, there will be a tendency to draw nearer and nearer to the British ideal, which is to give plenty of chance to the prisoner and to act on the assumption that he is innocent until proved guilty. It would, perhaps, be a perfect system, if judges were more open-minded and counsel less insolent to witnesses.

## CHAPTER XIX

### DISCONTENT AND ITS CAUSES

THE Springtime is favourable to Revolution, especially amongst Latin races. For the last few years, every May Day has brought with it a train of terrors. The Revolution has been announced, and M. Lépine, the watchful Prefect of Paris, has held the bridges and patrolled the streets with mounted troops as if the city were really menaced by an insurrectionary mob. In the great towns of France there have been similar scenes. From what causes spring these periodical alarms? This concluding chapter will be devoted to a consideration of the subject. The usual "malaise" was heightened, in the spring of 1909, by a new fact: a Strike movement in the Civil Service itself. When functionaries agitate, unconstitutionally, there is ground for Bourgeois alarm. And the Bourgeoisie was alarmed. This "fait nouveau," which seemed to presage all sorts of struggles and Social "bouleversements," resulted from the strangest marriage. The black-coated, rather consequential clerk in the Post Office allied himself to the horny-handed, be-bloused workman of the Confédération Générale du Travail, the most insurrectionary body in the country. No one had hitherto suspected that such a union was possible: MM. les Fonctionnaires de l'Etat with the Proletariat! It seemed incredible. As a result of it, trade and industry in Paris and throughout France were dislocated for a week or more.





MAY DAY, PLACE DE LA CONCORDE  
M. LÉPINE, PREFECT OF POLICE WITH LIEUTENANT OF CHASSEURS



No telegraphs flashed their messages from end to end of the country, no letters arrived on the merchant's desk, containing orders for his goods or cheques or "traites" in exchange for them. A rumour existed that the railways intended to add to the general confusion by throwing in their lot with the Postal workers.

The publication of the banns of this "mésalliance" took place at a great meeting of postal employés and artisans held in a Paris hall in the early days of April, 1909, when Emile Pataud, a notorious strike-leader (whose exploit in "cutting" the electric current I mention in a preceding chapter), spoke of revolution and "sabotage"—the wilful destruction of the means or produce of manufacture—and was cheered to the echo by the Civil servants present. Something, evidently, had changed when black coats and corduroys fraternized. It showed that certain of the elements existed for a general rising, if not for a general strike.

Part of a labour leader's "modus operandi" is to make the flesh of the Bourgeoisie creep. The practice is particularly dear to the French species, which loves to create sensation, to be regarded as holding in its hands the lives and property of the middle classes. Now, since not more than fifty per cent of the members of the Syndicates or Trade Unions are affiliated to the Confederation, and only five per cent of French workers are regularly inscribed on the lists of the Parti Syndicaliste, it is apparent that the General Confederation is a very small body. Whence, then, comes its power? It comes, principally, from the fear of the Government to exercise repressive measures. It is undoubtedly true that a strong and fearless authority would speedily take the heart out of the present movement.

Though a great deal must be attributed to the French desire for excitement and change, the causes of this curious

yearly agitation go much deeper than that. So deeply, indeed, do they go that they are bound up in the blood and tissues of the country and cannot be eradicated without a serious surgical operation. Revolution, in some form or other, appears inevitable within a certain fixed period of time. Yet it seems certain that the pendulum will swing again to its old position, because that position represents the mean time of social and political France.

Only the most confirmed optimist could suppose that matters can remain as they are. There are too many causes making for change. Of these the principal is the increasing difficulty of the lower and middle-class inhabitants of the towns to make both ends meet. The most casual observer remarks the loss of the old-time politeness and courtesy of small functionaries, shop assistants and servants in Paris and the large towns. Though, of course, the metropolis must not be confounded with France, it gives the lead, nowadays, to movements of an anti-Governmental character. Surliness springs from the fact that persons in small salaried positions are feeling the pinch of higher taxation and a considerable increase in the cost of living, whilst the industrial position of the country gives them no horizon, no hope of bettering their position—that hope which is so potent a cause in allaying popular discontent in the United States and in postponing the inevitable reckoning between the “haves” and the “have nots.”

A love of luxury has descended the line and now affects strata of society which were formerly exempt from ambition. It is true that the “petite Bourgeoisie” is a virtuous, self-contained, laborious and sober class of society, working hard and living hard to consolidate its position and to provide for its old age, but on the fringes of this class is a large number of persons affected by the lavish expenditure of the cosmopolitan host of Paris. This class imitates

the one above it in its dress and amusements. One of the mysteries that hedge about the existence of the salaried official in France is his ability to lead a life of external prosperity. He visits the theatre regularly with his wife, buys fashionable gowns for her, takes his family each year to the seaside, makes an occasional appearance in an expensive restaurant and, generally, conducts himself bravely before the world. How is it done? Only by the most rigorous, the most unlovely kind of economy. The French have brought economy to a fine art. They economize in their household arrangements, in the little daily expenditure which, insensibly, augments the family budget in English, and, particularly, in American households; they economize in their children, taking care not to have more than one or two in a family. By this means, they manage to maintain an exterior of comfort and even luxury.

During the last twenty years, the lot of the "petit monde" has not been a happy one. Living expenses have increased in all the large towns. In Paris this is due, in a large measure, to the incursion of rich foreigners, whose demands for luxurious accommodation have forced up prices. In the West End are streets of palaces which give shelter to the exotic millionaire; in the Champs Elysées and the avenues radiating from the Etoile, large hotels have been erected which represent the last word in elegance and comfort. Contrast the habits of life and lavish expenditure of foreign visitors with the old-time Bourgeois existence. The pleasures of the Frenchman of the old school are simple and inexpensive; he visits, rarely, places of amusement, and exercises economy and sobriety in every relation of life. The American, under which name I include the South American, gives an example of the opposite kind. He arrives in Paris, with the express object of spending money, and a class of parasites has



arisen to enable him to accomplish it in the shortest time and with the greatest profit to itself. Even in the Latin Quarter, the influence of the rich stranger is felt to the detriment of the poor native artist, who has to pay more for his studio.

These things have their influence upon the rising generation. The incitement to spend money is unfortunate upon imitative and expansive natures. The desire to acquire honestly is not always as strong as the desire to spend.

Those classes in which the spending habit is most highly developed are not those who contribute most to the national wealth, either in the arts or manufactures. A penniless "*jeunesse dorée*" is a feature of the social life of Paris; it constitutes a danger to society. The young member of an aristocracy more or less authentic—generally very much less—is led into dishonourable paths by tastes and appetites that are not subordinated to his income. He is lured to join the bogus company, to accept the "*pot de vin*," for some piece of influence to be exercised in a social capacity, and to resort to other practices of a questionable sort in order to continue the illusory parade of riches. There is no more dangerous class in the world than a certain cosmopolitan set of men and women, who use every means to exploit a bogus title. A recent successful play in Paris, by Maurice Donnay, satirizes, under the title of "*Paraître*," the persons who are haunted with the desire to appear in finer feathers than their situation warrants.

Ambition, not always accompanied by principle, dominates a large proportion of the lower classes. The *conciergerie's* son dreams of being Minister or of following one of the liberal professions, and it is not unlikely that his ambition will be realized, though this, of course, may be perfectly legitimate. Nearly every member of the Cabinet is a self-made man, though not always in the good old English



ARREST OF MANIFESTANTS, ESPLANADE DES INVALIDES



sense. Intrigue or "piston" will, apparently, carry a man further in France than mere merit or natural distinction.

Gratuitous and even egregious as it would be to attack the character of the average deputy, it is nevertheless true that patronage and influence play a preponderating rôle at the Palais Bourbon. There are English M.P.'s of whom it could be said that they have never recommended so much as a Civil servant to office; it would be more difficult to find a French deputy who was equally sparing of his power. Whilst men of the loftiest character sit in the Chamber, the self-interest of others is only too apparent. The electoral reform known as the "scrutin de liste" (or list-voting) has been introduced, I repeat, as a relief against a system which appears to place local interests above those of country. It is thought that, with the substitution of list-voting for the "scrutin d'arrondissement" (or uninominal voting, as in England) a better class of man, more independent in his actions and wider in his outlook, will be returned to the Chamber. With proportional representation in operation, minorities would have their voice in the national legislature, thereby ensuring an even-handed and less partial system of government.

Whether such a reform would effect the transformation desired, it is difficult to say, but the old system has been tried and found wanting. Cynics declare that the average deputy regards his advent to the Palais Bourbon as a special dispensation of Providence designed to enable him to provide comfortably for his family. If he owes his elevation above his fellows to keenness of intellect and glibness of tongue, that criticism has its application, doubtless, to other democracies. The professional man, who has failed to make a career for himself, is too often the recruit of politics. Such a class, even inspired by the best motives, offers no serious barrier to impulsive

legislation, or legislation in the interests of a single class. To use the old-fashioned phrase, it has no stake in the country. By the nature of its origin, its temptation is to become time-serving and Opportunist. The very simplicity of the electoral system, entirely free from the expensive and complicated character of the English machine, seems to aid in the return of men incapable of giving direction to popular movements.

It has been said that one of the results of the "scrutin d'arrondissement" in a system of universal suffrage is to make the deputy the valet of his electors. According to a recent writer in "La Revue," Parliament is nothing but an assembly of municipal and county councillors attentive to local desires, deferential to the representatives of authority, humble to any who have influence with the electoral mass, with eyes always turned towards their "circonscription," full of fear and cowardly before moral responsibility. It may be said that the Lower Chamber has shown a remarkable ineptitude in dealing with social reform. Elsewhere, I quote the Weekly Rest Act. Before its amendment, it was a clumsy piece of legislation which produced, at the moment of its passing, formidable demonstrations of protest amongst small shopkeepers and workmen whose interests were seriously compromised. Again, the limitation in the number of "débits de vin," the resolution of the question of the "Bouilleurs de crû" (or private distillers) and the regulation of gaming-houses have all shown the evils of chaos and incoherence, the lack of practical ideas amongst the legislators, and also, it would seem, the value, to the parties interested, of "friends at Court." The law as to gambling is in a particularly unsatisfactory state, leaving the keepers of "tripots" masters of the towns and villages of France. As the writer, whose article I have just quoted, very trenchantly remarks (of the



deputies): "Their fathers dethroned kings; they, themselves, drove out the monks and sent away the priest from the schools and from his position as servant of the State; they have emancipated consciences, but they have not known how to cure the essential vices of our people: alcoholism and gambling, hideous sores which eat into the side of France."

One of the marked symptoms of the present time is a dissatisfaction with the Parliamentary régime. It is not so much a dislike of the Republic as a dislike of Republicanism. Its more recent developments began, I think, with the day when MM. les Députés voted themselves an increase of seventy per cent in their Parliamentary pay. This made a disagreeable impression upon the country. The shamefaced alacrity of the proceeding—a rapid vote without any appeal to the people, the paymasters—was an ugly commentary on the accusations of self-interest which have been repeatedly hurled at the popular assembly. The Republic has failed to carry out its ideal. Read the speeches of its founders, and you will discover that they hankered after some system of government which would recall the glory of Athens and the frugality of Sparta with those adaptations necessary to the special genius of the French. There is little that is Athenian in the composition of the Third Republic.

I have shown that the chief factors in the present discontent are the rise in cost of living and the desire for greater luxury on the part of the classes of modest income. Ambition has permeated society and caused the inferior to look with envy and hatred upon his superior, and the superior to take every opportunity of pushing his own interest, to make hay whilst the sun shines. Then there is the flattery and insincerity of the Parliamentarians, who have raised false hopes in the breasts of the people,

hopes that can never be realized whilst human nature remains what it is and the world refuses to model itself on the dream cosmos of Edward Bellamy.

Another cause of the periodical convulsion of labour is the unsatisfied intelligence of the workers. There is no country in Europe where the artisan of the big towns reaches an equal level of acute intelligence. This is unbalanced, frequently, by moral training: thus there is present in the body politic a fiercely insistent class that claims the good things of the earth. In Northern nations a sane reflection as to ways and means tempers the ardour of political and social aspiration, but amongst the French industrial classes there is always the feeling that economic miracles can be performed by Act of Parliament. If wages and other conditions are bad, then they can be rectified by putting pressure upon the employer of labour. This is the half-naïve suggestion that floats on the mass of Socialist rhetoric. It is born, perhaps, of those experiments—ill-doomed but still fascinating—in collective production, which were conducted during the Revolution. The Anglo-Saxon worker's political education is less advanced, but he is possessed of a sturdy common sense which leads him to eschew the general idea and look for salvation in individual or trade union action on definite lines, rather than in ebullitions of a Socialist character, which leave untouched the pressing problem of a living wage. The law of supply and demand plays little part in these generous but impracticable ideals. The mental development of the worker, unaccompanied, as I say, by the reflection that acts as ballast, constitutes one of the dangers of the situation in France.

It cannot be urged that the French proletariat are worse off, either in their personal and political liberties or in the conditions of their labour, than the peoples of other Euro-



PLACE DE LA CONCORDE PREPARED TO RECEIVE LABOUR DEMONSTRATORS



pean nations. They are not oppressed, and more is done to render their lives bright and interesting than is the case in England. On the other hand, the special character of the French intelligence renders the people more prone to the idealism of the demagogue than the English masses, whose attachment to general principles is limited by a shrewd appreciation of realities. Nor must it be forgotten that the French Revolution is still in process of fulfilment. Its work is not yet accomplished. An important sequel of the great historic upheaval is the separation of Church and State, an extraordinary measure when one considers the long connection of the country with Rome, a connection which earned for her the title of "Eldest daughter of the Church." The great-grandchildren of the men who revolted in 1789 and slew the fair flower of the French aristocracy, have to-day become towers of Bourgeois respectability and barriers to the progress of working-class demands. This same Bourgeoisie, which was the real agent of the Great Revolution, now has the force it invoked turned against itself. One of the most patent facts in the contemporary history of France is the decay of the middle class. The Tiers Etat is disappearing in favour of the Quatrième Etat. There is no young and rising man of Bourgeois family and traditions in the Parliamentary arena. As I declare in my opening chapter, the politician of the future will come directly from the people.

Though the leaders of Revolutionary labour are diffident in telling the exact methods by which they propose to effect the salvation of the people, it is not impossible to indicate the general lines of their programme. The idea of Emile Pataud, who is, certainly, the most prominent of the chiefs of the new movement, is suddenly to suspend the working life of France. The precise hour of that suspension is a secret which reposes in the bosom of the Council



of Twelve, which constitutes the Inner Cabinet of the *Confédération Générale du Travail*. There exists a regular plan to cripple the commerce and industry of the country. At a given moment the hand of labour will be arrested. Trains will stop on the railways, workmen will throw down their tools in the workshops; armies will stay upon the march, refusing to obey orders; every department of public life will be paralysed. "THE PLAN" amounts to a boycott by the people of the ruling classes. That is the secret dream of the Revolutionary. By its means the façade of the Bourgeois Constitution will fall, leaving nakedness and chaos. In its place these re-organizers of society propose to erect a Government of Syndicates or Trade Unions. Every class in the community will be represented by a body competent to speak for its interests. The professional man, as well as the labourer, the capitalist—if one can suppose a capitalist in the New France—and the salaried servant of the State, will combine to preserve their social and political entities. It will be a Parliament of experts. The representative sent to that Parliament will differ from the Deputy in that he can be removed at the first failure to give satisfaction to his constituents. One of the chief complaints of the present system is that the Socialist Deputy, arrived at Ministerial position, rejects his old principles and associates himself definitely with the ruling classes. Under the Trade Union system this would be impossible. The representative in Parliament would remain the servant of those who sent him there. The moment his views ceased to be in harmony with the actual workers, he would be recalled to take his place in the ranks.

This system leaves out of consideration the important fact that power must exist somewhere. If it does not exist in Parliament, it will exist out of Parliament—

in secret societies and organizations. History has shown us the deplorable effect of tyranny exercised in the dark.

One of the strangest effects of the new movement is its indifference to Socialism. M. Jaurès, the eloquent chief of the Parliamentary Socialists, sheds tears over this important defection, but his invitation to the Syndicalists to make common cause with the Extreme Left in Parliament, has hitherto fallen on deaf ears. Syndicalism is independent of politics. That is its most striking feature.

What is the force that can counteract this new influence, which threatens to disintegrate the country and undo the work of consolidation of the last forty years? Is it the Monarchy? No one familiar with France will doubt that a constitutional monarch would satisfy the aspirations of a large section of the people, but as I insist elsewhere in this book, it is difficult to conceive of a monarchy without an aristocracy, and the aristocracy is hopelessly lost. Moreover, one searches in vain amongst the Pretenders for a man capable of leading the country to new destinies. The remedy must rather be sought in the reform of Parliament and in the institution of new electoral methods for the recruitment of the deputy. This very question as I indicate, is occupying the legislature, and the Elections of 1910 were the last to be fought under the "scrutin d'arrondissement," with its narrow appeal to local influences. Nepotism and the other evils complained of must cease. These are, perhaps, but palliatives only calculated to defer the evil day. Some sort of revolution would appear to be inevitable amongst the town populations, but it is difficult to see how the lot of the working classes is to be improved thereby, even if one supposes that the peasant would help the townsman to overthrow a system under which he has secured all the "bien-être" possible.



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